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THE COMMEDIA ERUDITA IN THE BRESCIAN TERRITORY IN THE  
MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY (1545 - 1558)

Ph.D./Doctorial Thesis

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## Introduction

There have been numerous historical studies and literary analyses of sixteenth-century Italian theatre. However, attention has almost exclusively been devoted to those towns which played a major role: Venice, Florence, Rome, Ferrara, Mantua. Almost every scholar has neglected those regions which can be defined as 'peripheral areas'. The main aim of this study on the theatre in Brescia and the Bresciano is, therefore, to remedy this omission at least in part.

The research has been neither short nor easy. It has involved the discovery and analysis of documents and records which were unknown or had been forgotten: not a vast collection of material, but a significant one. It deals with the theatrical production of a town and its region (and thus with those historical and cultural characteristics that have influenced that theatre) which in terms of wealth and territory was the most important under the Republic of Venice and the second most important in Lombardy.

It is well-known that sixteenth-century theatre was the expression of a cultural interest of the courts (as well as of their desire for a new form of entertainment). It is in this context that Brescia with its province is of particular relevance both on a political and literary level. Politically because, though it was one of the major towns in Northern Italy, Brescia had no court and was subject to Venice; from a literary point of view on account of its close links with three major Renaissance theatre centres, Mantua, Milan and Venice and its cultural contacts with Europe; and linguistically because it was a Lombard-speaking area under the direct rule of a Venetian-speaking republic.

It was therefore necessary to establish whether the history of sixteenth-century Brescian comedy could be dismissed with the one cursory paragraph existing on the subject:

Quanto al teatro, ritornano qui soltanto gli echi della vita teatrale italiana [...]. In realtà, il teatro presupponeva una vita aristocraticamente culturale assai più evoluta di quanto non comportasse la situazione sociale della città, ove la mancanza di una corte da una parte, e di una plebe viva di iniziative e di idee dall'altra, non favorivano quello sviluppo tutto originale, sino quasi alla vera opera d'arte, che esistette altrove nei territori della Serenissima. 1

What research for this thesis has shown is not so much that Caccia's comment was inaccurate as inadequate. In Brescia, Asola and Salò the local nobility rivalled with one another in staging the same plays which were successful in the major Renaissance towns - in the national circuits, as we would say today; the cartellone was varied and up to date; and, furthermore, new works were commissioned to local playwrights who were evidently aware of the current trends in theatre forms, not only in nearby Venice but also in other cities.

Having arrived at this preliminary conclusion it was then necessary to answer many other questions: why was the theatre restricted in Brescia to one luogo teatrale, the Broletto, which was the residence of the Venetian Rettori? Why was the theatre in Brescia, even more exclusively than elsewhere, intended as a pastime for a restricted and selected audience of gentiluomini? Why was the rest of the potential public (practically most of the

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1. Ettore Caccia, 'Cultura e letteratura nei secoli XV-XVI', in Storia di Brescia, promoted and directed by Giovanni Treccani degli Alfieri (5 vols, Milan, 1963-64 and index), II (1963), p. 527 and n., 5.

population) not involved in this form of cultural activity? Why - and this is probably the most significant problem - despite the now evident interest in the theatre, were there no plays written in the Brescian dialect in a period when in the provinces nearby, there were a number of respected authors (e.g. Ruzzante), who brought on to the stage characters speaking in Venetian and Bergamasco dialect?

These questions relate to a series of problems and this has led to the division of this thesis into two parts. The first provides a picture of the historical and social situation which may have influenced the theatre in Brescia. This, in its turn, involved a description of the logistic problems and legislative regulations which may have shaped the theatre's repertoire, together with an assessment of the role played by the Rettori of the Serenissima as mecenati in this part of the Terraferma.<sup>2</sup>

In the second part of the thesis the literary analysis of the plays substantiates conclusions reached in the first part. In fact more than any other literary genre in the Renaissance, theatre was closely linked to the audience so that it can be considered the first form of mass media. In point of fact, in his edition of Commedie del Cinquecento, Nino Borsellino grouped the plays with reference to geographical areas, and concluded that the Italian theatre of the period, though homogeneous in its basic structures, appears regionally diversified in its choice of themes and technical development.<sup>3</sup> Ettore Paratore has however recently expressed his fears that to

2. Because of the extension of the Brescian province, this work is largely based on research in the libraries and archives of Brescia, Salò and Asola, integrated with research in Venice, Bergamo, Mantua and Milan.
3. 'Introduzione' to Commedie del Cinquecento, edited by Nino Borsellino (2 vols, Milan, 1962-7) I, p. xxiv. The same opinion is expressed in Il Cinquecento dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma, La letteratura italiana. Storia e testi, edited by Nino Borsellino and Marcello Aurigemma (Rome-Bari, 1973), IV, tome II, p. 3; the paragraph quoted is by Borsellino.

adopt a method applied to the study of painting, where schools are differentiated according to regions, could lead to a forced, and therefore inaccurate, division of the output <sup>of</sup> Renaissance comedy.<sup>4</sup>

Though bearing in mind the possible exaggeration and misconception of Nino Borsellino's approach, it has seemed appropriate nevertheless to group I Gelosi by Vincenzo Gabiani, Agnella by Carlo Turco and Il Sergio by Ludovico Fenarolo, according to their region of origin for the two main advantages that derive from such an approach. Firstly it becomes possible to analyse and assess the artistic value of the plays in relation to the social and historical background in which they were written and staged. Secondly it enables evidence to be established concerning a network of influences exercised by the major theatre centres over areas which have been researched less in detail than the better known areas. It has brought into relief a cross-section of cultural influences ranging from the Northern European School of Terentian critics, to the Sienese Academy of the Intronati and to Venice itself with the theatre of Artemio Giancarli and Andrea Calmo.

Of the plays which have survived, I have analysed the following: I Gelosi<sup>5</sup> by Vincenzo Gabiani (1545); Agnella<sup>6</sup> by Carlo Turco (1550); and Il Sergio<sup>7</sup> by Ludovico Fenarolo (1558). The four comedies

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4. Ettore Paratore, 'Nuove prospettive sull'influsso del teatro classico nel '500', in Il teatro classico italiano nel '500. Atti del Convegno 9-12 febbraio 1969, Roma (Rome, 1971), pp.71-80.
  5. Vincenzo Gabiani, I Gelosi, appresso Gabriel Giolito De Ferrari e Fratelli (Venice, 1551).
  6. Carlo Turco, Agnella, on the frontispiece there is the Aldine impresa (Venice, 1585).
  7. Ludovico Fenarolo, Il Sergio, appresso Bolognino Zaltieri (Venice, 1562). Hereafter quotations are from this and the above quoted editions which are the earliest extant.

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written by Nicolò Secco, which, contrary to the footnote in the Storia di Brescia, are not 'ignote',<sup>8</sup> are excluded from this work since although they are among the most lively and entertaining plays of the period, their artistic complexity, the need to determine more precisely the date of their composition, and the desire to establish further information about the way they were staged, would necessitate an entire study on these plays alone.

The pastoral play Aurora, by Ottavio Brescianini, has also been excluded as its correct date is 1588, and not 1558 as stated in the Storia di Brescia.<sup>9</sup>

The language of Renaissance records and the plays have not been edited for two reasons: it was felt that linguistic variations and 'inconsistencies' were historical documents in themselves, being evidence of the fluid state of the Tuscan language in a non-Tuscan area, in a thesis which emphasizes that one of the important factors in a study of the comedy in Brescia is that the local playwrights wrote in a 'foreign language'. Secondly, the third play which is analysed,

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8. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 527 and n., 5.

9. Ibid. The later date is indicated in the letter by the author to Marco Mantova in the only edition known: Ottavio Brescianini, detto Il Chimerico, Aurora. Favola pastorale (Padua, 1588). The date is also quoted by Lione Allacci, Drammaturgia (Turin, 1966, anastatic copy of the edition expanded by Giovanni Cendone, Venice, 1755), ad vocem. Gianmaria Mazzucchelli, Gli scrittori d'Italia (2 vols, Brescia, 1753-63), I, p. 2071. Bartolommeo [sic] Gamba, Serie degli scritti impressi in dialetto veneziano (Venice, 1832), p. 95. Bruno Brunelli, I teatri di Padova dalle origini alla fine del secolo XIX (Padua, 1921), p. 41. Giovanni Antonio Cibotto, 'Introduzione' to Teatro veneto (Bologna, 1960), p. xlv.

Il Sergio, is written for the most part in Bergamasco and Veneto:  
to provide an edited text would be a thesis in itself, because,  
even more than for the records in Italian and the other two plays,  
it would be necessary first of all to distinguish between the  
vagaries of the printing presses and the genuine linguistic features.  
(Only & has been changed into e).

PART I

A MONOPOLY OF THE LOCAL NOBILITY

A Town Without a Court

Historians and critics have demonstrated how in Italy the sixteenth-century theatre was the expression of a society which had its epicentre in the court, and how dramatists from Ariosto onwards wrote to gratify the cultural tastes of the courtiers.

As Mario Apollonio well summarizes,

dell'arte teatrale poi la corte del signore (che era, come s'è visto, o voleva essere la sublimazione trionfale d'ogni attività cittadina) diventava l'interprete naturale. E le rappresentazioni di commedie latine, che si succedettero in quasi tutte le città d'Italia sarebbero rimaste pura archeologia senza l'interesse delle corti che adagio adagio, prima per vaga curiosità, poi per impegno snobistico, si affacciarono a quel nuovo senso della realtà che fu la commedia. I

Since this opinion is based solely on evidence from the major courts of the Renaissance, one is left to speculate as to how the theatre fared in places such as Brescia, which had no court to act as a unifying and influential centre; how did the absence of a court affect the development of the theatre, and what was the role of the local nobility in a city which had a strong tradition of municipal freedom, but which by the middle of the sixteenth century was firmly subjected to the government of the

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1. Storia del teatro italiano (2nd edition, 4 vols, Florence, 1943 - 50) I, p. 273.



Republic of Venice. As the historian Angelo Ventura recalls, Machiavelli describes this as a very dangerous condition for the town's institutions:

E di tutte le servitù dure quella è durissima che ti sottomette a una repubblica: l'una perchè la è più durabile [...], l'altra perchè il fine della repubblica è enervare ed indebolire, per accrescere il corpo suo, tutti gli altri corpi: il che non fa uno principe [il quale] il più delle volte ama le città sue soggette egualmente, ed a loro lascia l'arti tutte e quasi tutti gli ordini antichi, talchè se le non possono crescere come libere, elle non rovinano anche come schiave. 2.

Moreover, Brescia strategically<sup>3</sup> and economically was one of the most important towns in Northern Italy, had the highest population in Lombardy after Milan and was wealthy<sup>4</sup> in a period when magnificence and pomp were essential ingredients of any theatrical performance. It was situated at the cross-roads of three of the most important centres of the Italian Renaissance

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2. Niccolo [sic] Machiavelli, Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio, II, 2, in Opere, edited by Mario Bonfantini (2nd edition, Milan-Naples, 1963), p. 229. It is quoted by Angelo Ventura, Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del '400 e '500 (Bari, 1964), pp. 169-70.
  3. Brescia was strategically important not only because of its geographical position but also because it was the major centre for the production of arms and weapons in the Terraferma. It is not unlikely that this may have brought a more firm control of the Venetian authorities on every activity in Brescia and may have influenced the development of the theatre; for further details see ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis.
  4. Brescia, the Civic Library Queriniana (hereafter Queriniana), Agostino Gallo, Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, undated, probably written between 1540 and 1570, autograph MS. C.I.13 N. 15, Storia di Brescia, II, chs. III and V. Carlo Cocchetti, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia (Milan, 1858), pp. 91 ff. Carlo Pasero, Dati statistici e notizie intorno al movimento della popolazione bresciana durante il dominio veneto (1426-1797), (Milan, 1963), extract from Archivio Storico Lombardo, 1961, serie 9, I, pp. 15 ff. These works also tell of the constant complaints of the local population against excessive taxation imposed by Venice and against the Rettori's reports describing Brescia as a very wealthy town.

theatre, Mantua, Milan and Venice,<sup>5</sup> and was traditionally one of the places to be visited during the grand tour. As John Florio recorded in his diary,

when I have seene Millaine, then will I see those  
fayre Cities, scituate amongst the King of floods,  
Po: as Ferrara, Parma, Cremona, Mantoa, and also  
Pavia, and Brescia.<sup>6</sup>

Since in the following chapters it is suggested that the monopoly of the local nobility over the theatre in Brescia was even more absolute than in the other major Renaissance centres, and that this was one of the likely causes of the absence of a theatrical production with true Brescian regional characteristics, this first part will show how the exclusive control of the nobility over all forms of entertainment was not merely accidental, but coincided with a gradual aristocratic monopoly over the government of the town. At the same time, since the second important factor in the development of the theatre was the role played by the Rettori, this brief survey will include

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5. Alessandro D'Ancona, 'Il teatro mantovano nel secolo XVI', in Origini del teatro italiano (2 vols, Rome, 1966, anastatic reproduction of the 1st edition, Turin, 1891), II, pp. 349 ff. Domenico Manzella and Emilio Pozzi, I teatri di Milano (Milan, 1971), pp. 20-2. Pompeo Molmenti, 'The Golden Age', in Venice. Its Individual Growth from the Earliest Beginnings to the Fall of the Republic, translated by Horatio F. Brown (6 vols, London, 1906-8) part 2, (1907), II, ch. X. Diego Valeri, 'Caratteri e valori del teatro comico', in La civiltà veneziana del Rinascimento, edited by the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice (Venice-Florence, 1958), pp. 3-25. Studi sul teatro veneto, tra Rinascimento ed età barocca, edited by Maria Teresa Muraro, with a presentation by Gianfranco Folena (Florence, 1971).
  6. John Florio, Second Frutes, reproduction of the edition of 1591, edited by R.C.Simonini Jr. (Florida, 1953), p. 107. For the importance of the Alpine Valleys in the Brescian territory as routes between the Mediterranean world and Northern Europe, see Fernand Braudel, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II (2nd, enlarged edition, 2 vols, Paris, 1966), I, p. 188. D.S.Chambers, The Imperial Age of Venice 1380-1580 (London, 1970), p. 55.

some observations on the relationship between the nobility of Brescia and the highest echelon of the Venetian government in Brescia. This is necessary in order to assess the degree of cultural freedom enjoyed by the Brescian nobility, and the part it played in fostering the various forms of entertainment, including the theatre, in an age when cultural and political power were indivisible.<sup>7</sup>

Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the position of the noble families in Brescia was that of a casta which had been granted privileges and honorary status, but which had been gradually deprived of real political power. The acquisition of this hollow power was the result of the political strategy adopted by Venice in the sixteenth century, towards all the towns of the Terraferma; a strategy which, in turn, can be traced back to the deep crisis suffered by Venice during the war following the League of Cambrai (1509-1516), when the Serenissima suffered the most dramatic defeat in her history (Agnadello 1509), lost almost all her Northern possessions including Brescia, which passed to the

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7. On the connections between Italian Renaissance comedy and the local social and political structure, see Apollonio, II. Silvio D'Amico, Storia del teatro (5th edition, revised and expanded, 4 vols, Milan, 1968), II, ch. II. Borsellino and Aurigemma, IV, 2, pp. 3-4. J.S. Kennard, The Italian Theatre, (2nd edition, 2 vols, New York, 1964), I, ch. IX. D'Ancona, II, ch. III. Cristoforo Tentori, 'Sugli spettacoli, e festeggiamenti appresso gli antichi veneziani', in Saggio sulla storia civile, politica, ecclesiastica e sulla corografia e topografia degli Stati della Repubblica di Venezia (12 vols, Venice, 1785-90), I, pp. 231-50. Girolamo Tiraboschi, Storia della letteratura italiana (9 vols, Venice, 1795-96), VII, part I, pp. 13 ff.

French King Louis XII, and in the most crucial years of the war felt the city itself to be threatened.<sup>8</sup>

After the peace of Noyon (1516) and the reacquisition of all the Terraferma apart from Cremona, the Venetian government proceeded drastically to re-examine its policy towards the cities of the interior. Its new political attitude could not ignore either the probability that war would continue on Italian territory or the persistent threat of the Turks.<sup>9</sup> The struggle against the Turks in defence of her territory overseas suggested to Venice that 'politica di raccoglimento',<sup>10</sup> a policy which to this day had been extensively debated by historians:<sup>11</sup>

Venezia aveva definitivamente rinunciato all'antico suo programma di espansione territoriale al di là del Po e nella Lombardia, ove la Potenza spagnola la teneva a rispetto e soltanto le consentiva di conservare lo status quo; ogni pensiero, tutte le sue forze furono da quegli anni in poi rivolti alla difesa dei possedimenti d'oltre mare minacciati dall'avanzata dei turchi. 12

To achieve this well-known strategy of non-involvement and of conciliation, Venice needed a peaceful situation in the mainland and it was her continuous policy to foster it by averting all

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8. Felix Gilbert, 'Venice in the Crisis of the League of Cambrai', in Renaissance Venice, edited by J.R. Hale (London, 1973), pp. 274-92.
  9. Federico Chabod, 'Venezia nella politica italiana ed europea del Cinquecento', in La civiltà veneziana del Rinascimento, pp. 29-55.
  10. Ibid., pp. 43-4.
  11. Ventura, p. 40 and n., 2 for the bibliography on the controversy.
  12. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 321.

potential revolt among the aristocratic families of the Terzaferma. The state of incessant unrest in the neighbouring states, the expansionist ambitions of the French Kings and Spanish Emperors were particularly disquieting for Venice and affected her relationship with Brescia, in that the Brescian aristocracy had previously given abundant proof of ill-faith. After the defeat of Agnadello,

tutte le fonti d'ogni parte testimoniano concordi questa frattura, che si ripete in ogni parte dello stato veneziano, da Bergamo al Friuli: i nobili e 'cittadini' animosi contro Venezia e favorevoli all'impero e ai francesi; i popolari invece nelle città, e i contadini sviscerati 'marcheschi'. 13

Even later during the alternate phases of the war of the Holy League against the Emperor Charles V (1526-29), some members of the most important aristocratic families in Brescia fought on the Emperor's side and shared in his triumphant coronation in Bologna in 1530. 14

To show that Venetian fears were not all imaginary, there is the famous episode of Don Ferrante Gonzaga who suggested the Emperor should 'tener intelligenze' in Brescia as well as in other towns nearby so that if the opportunity arose it would have been possible 'far qualche effecto dentro'.<sup>15</sup> Another episode, perhaps

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13. Ventura, p. 169.

14. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 320, n., 2.

15. Chabod, pp.46, 54 n., 9. The original source is in Archivo General de Simancas, 1193, f. 95.

less well known, is that of Gerolamo Martinengo who in 1546 was still plotting to become signore of some towns in Lombardy:

nella vasta sua mente immoderate e terribili cose volgendo, scriveva al re Cristianissimo avrebbe ad un suo comando messi in armi tremila fanti e mille cavalli, quando signore lo facesse d'una delle città di Lombardia ch'ei sapeva già da esso desiderate. 16

Consequently the Venetian attitude was justifiably one of mistrust, and signs of this appear time and again. After the recapture of the town,

nei vari paesi del territorio furono prontamente spediti rappresentanti veneti [while] i podestà ed i vicari cittadini ricominciarono a regolarmente funzionare soltanto dal I ottobre 1517. 17

And as late as 1546, Marcantonio De Mula, one of the Rettori, in his report to the Serenissima, openly warned of the dangers of over-trusting the nobles of the town. He admitted that one of them, Camillo Avogadro, was an excellent soldier and in times of peace could even be trusted to take charge of the garrison of the town, but added:

a tempo di suspecti V.a. Celsitudine ha provveduto et provvedera aprendo li occhi opportune non si fidando salvo di se stesso per molte cause scripte ali ecc.mi s.ri Capi et ben considerate dalla summa sapientia sua. 18.

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16. Federico Odorici, Storie bresciane dai primi tempi sino all'eta nostra, (hereafter Storie bresciane), (11 vols, Brescia, 1853-65), IX, (1860), p.198. Further episodes of intelligence work with the help of Brescian noblemen are reported by Jean Brunon and Jean Barrauol, Les francais en Italie sous Henri II d'après les papiers du baron de Fourguevaux, homme de guerre et diplomate, ordonnateur général du roi de France en Italie, 1550-1557 (Marseilles, 1952), p. 57.
  17. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 297 and n., 1..
  18. Relazioni di Rettori veneti a Brescia durante il secolo XVI (hereafter Relazioni di Rettori), edited by Carlo Pasero (Toscolano, 1939), p. 58. See also the Relazione by the Rettore Francesco Tagliapietra in 1567, *ibid.*, p. 104.

However, although the relationship between the Brescian nobles and Venice was based on apprehension and suspicion, Venice needed the nobility to check the old municipal middle class which was still hankering after the past civic autonomy, and which was more difficult to control being of larger numbers. Therefore when,

Venezia procedette gradualmente a ripristinare la normalità amministrativa, rimettendo in funzione i Consigli e le magistrature delle città suddite [...] dopo l'amara esperienza del 1509, a nessuno poteva sfuggire quanto fosse pericoloso reintegrare nei suoi primitivi poteri e privilegi quel ceto dirigente 'cittadino', che nella sua grande maggioranza si era manifestato ostile alla Dominante. 19

Consequently Venice chose to reinforce the aristocratic guardianship over the town at the expense of the middle classes. In keeping with her policy since the occupation of Brescia (1426), Venice transferred all the local administration into the hands of the aristocracy, so that by the middle of the sixteenth century,

'tra tutte le città del dominio veneto, Brescia è la più aristocratica';

the Consiglio Cittadino includes all the nobles of the town and 'l'assemblea della comunità viene a identificarsi con tutto il corpo aristocratico'.<sup>20</sup> With this in view, she pursued a policy of appeasement towards the nobles who had betrayed her and recalled those who had been proscribed. As Carlo Pasero says in the

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19. Ventura, p. 244.

20. Ibid., pp. 278, 285. For a comparison with the other major towns of the Terraferma, see pp. 285-7. For the laws imposed by Venice in 1528-1545, see also Carlo Cocchetti, Del movimento intellettuale nella provincia di Brescia (hereafter, Del movimento intellettuale), (3rd edition, Brescia, 1880), p. 92.

Storia di Brescia, by a clause in the Treaty of Bologna (1529)

the wealth that Venice had confiscated from the Gambaara and the property it had taken from other nobles for the allegiance to the Emperor, were restored.<sup>21</sup> The Serenissima also showed a firm hand in acting as peace-maker, and in calming any hatred and division amongst the rival families. Bartolomeo Palazzo wrote in his Diario in 1540:

Adì 4 el M.co Podestà fece far la pace al conte  
Zorzo Martinengo et al Sig. Hieronimo Martinengo et  
ge dete disnare a tutti doi et poi fece ballare  
tutto quello dì. 22

Venice's tactical interest in peace in Brescia was clearly stated by the Rettore Marcantonio De Mula who in 1546 wrote that,

il governo della citta non diro per no esser  
troppo lungo ben exorto quelle a proveder alle  
disensioni et odii che sono tra la famelgia  
avogara et martinenga perche il tuto ritorna  
danno di vostra Celsitudine. 23

But although the Serenissima strengthened the supremacy of the aristocracy over the old municipal institutions<sup>24</sup> it is very important when considering the theatre in Brescia, not to

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21. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 320 n., 2.

22. Bartolomeo Palazzo, Diario 1502-1548, in Cronache bresciane inedite, sec. XV-XIX, transcribed with notes by Paolo Guerrini (5 vols, Brescia, 1922-32), I, p. 366.

23. Relazioni di Rettori, p. 59.

24. Ventura, p. 3. See also Cocchetti, Del movimento intellettuale, p. 92: 'Il Consiglio generale continuò ad essere popolare ed elettivo finchè nel 1488 la generale adunanza lo decretò ereditario nei discendenti de' cittadini originarii i quali non avessero esercitata arte meccanica dall'avo in poi'.



overestimate the autonomy of the Brescian nobility.<sup>25</sup>

It is essential to keep in mind that,

con la dominazione veneta i ceti dirigenti delle singole città avevano perduto una parte cospicua degli uffici pubblici. Nei principali centri del territorio, un tempo retti da podestà cittadini, ora Venezia manda suoi gentiluomini, ciascuno dei quali conduce un proprio cancelliere [...]. Nelle città le cause criminali e spesso quelle civili di maggiore rilievo, vengono devolute alla competenza del podestà veneziano e della sua 'corte', o, in alcuni casi, del capitano e dei camerlenghi, pure veneziani. 26

The Rettori were endorsed with key functions. Through the Rettori, Venice succeeded in controlling the most important municipal institutions: their task was to keep an eye and report on the social, economic and moral trends of those places which they were sent to survey.<sup>27</sup> Carlo Pasero, one of the most notable twentieth century scholars on the history of Brescia, in the introduction to his edition of the Relazioni di Rettori, summarizes the function of the Rettori in general and the importance attributed to them by the dominante:

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25. For the controversy about the degree and value of freedom granted by Venice to the local political institutions, see Ventura, pp. 39-41 and Chabod, pp. 50-1. It is also interesting to record the opinion of Agostino Gallo, a Brescian Renaissance comedy writer who congratulated his town for having always been well treated by the Venetian government: 'sempre ti han ben trattata piu tosto da buona figliuola, che da suddita', Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, MS. p. 6.

26. Ventura, p. 350.

27. Cocchetti, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia, p. 94: 'Il senato di Venezia sino dal 1524 ordinò che i rettori de' suoi domini di terraferma dovessero, compito l'ufficio loro, rendergli conto delle condizioni statistiche, economiche e morali dei luoghi da essi governati'.

I Rettori erano i supremi magistrati della città durante il dominio veneto e venivano accuratamente scelti dal Doge e dal Senato fra i più cospicui patrizi della Serenissima, affinché fossero affidati a mani sicure i posti di comando della 'fedelissima' (ma non sempre) Terra Ferma. La città ed il territorio di Brescia, del resto, ottenevano cure speciali dalla Dominante [...]. I Rettori erano due, sempre a coppia, il Podestà (Praetor) ed il Capitano (Praefectus); e negli intervalli tra la partenza o la scomparsa di uno di essi e l'arrivo del successore, il collega era generalmente incaricato della temporanea sostituzione. Il Podestà aveva veste civile, politica e giudiziaria, mentre il Capitano si occupava soprattutto degli affari militari e della Camera Ducale [...]. Cadevano sotto la giurisdizione del Podestà tutti i sudditi che non risultavano, direttamente o indirettamente, alle dipendenze della Dominante e quindi del Capitano. Egli sentenziava nei processi civili e criminali; controllava, col Capitano, la vita economica, commerciale, le industrie, i traffici, ecc. della città; a lui spettava inoltre il delicatissimo compito di sorvegliare i gangli della vita politica interna, i due Consigli, la Mercanzia, le Corporazioni dei mestieri e gli altri istituti locali. Nascevano quindi molto frequenti [...] gli urti con i rappresentanti cittadini, gelosissimi dei loro privilegi e dei loro statuti. 28

Thus the freedom allowed Brescia was firmly controlled; the Venetian authorities had in effect all the requisite legal power over the moral, intellectual and cultural activities of the town.

In the light of this, the first conclusion to be drawn is that while the nobility of a Court had the political power to impose its own cultural tastes on artistic expression, the nobility of a provincial town, such as Brescia, had ultimately to subject its intellectual life to the political interest of the dominante. This is a condition which is particularly significant in relation to the theatre, because in Renaissance Brescia, as elsewhere,

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28. Pasero, 'Introduzione' to Relazioni di Rettori, pp. 11-12.

the theatre was subject to censure and attacks on moral grounds. In Brescia, in particular, after 1511 comedies were no longer performed in private houses and the only lieu théâtral became the Palazzo del Broletto, which was the residence of the Rettori. Finally the few fragments of evidence on theatrical legislation in Brescia suggest that the Rettori alone could overrule the Consiglio Cittadino, the body authorized to licence all applications to perform plays.<sup>29</sup>

The cause and effect of the political and administrative domination of the aristocracy, and of the Venetian government over the theatre, will be analysed from two angles: first, in relation to other forms of entertainment, from the most sophisticated such as tournaments, to the most popular improvised revels: second, in connection with those administrative and logistic factors which were used to exercise a firm control over all forms of entertainment. These factors included the sumptuary laws which helped to exclude the middle class of artisans who, elsewhere, as in Venice, actively participated in and benefited from a thriving theatre; the bureaucratic machinery for obtaining permission to stage plays; the absence of a public theatre in Brescia; and the puzzling role of the Academies, particularly in the major centres of the province.

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29. For a discussion of all these statements and the bibliographical reference about them see ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis.

Aristocratic Entertainment: Tournaments, Jousts, Trionfi

This section, which has been compiled after sifting through all available local sixteenth-century diaries and chronicles, is introduced into a study of comedies since it is widely recognised that during the Renaissance the theatre appealed to the same desire for spectacle and pomp as did tournaments and jousts. Also, in Brescia and elsewhere, the theatre was considered part of *such* festivals and celebrations.<sup>1</sup> Finally, this section is valuable because as Francesco De Sanctis described,

le giostre erano in fondo una rappresentazione teatrale, e i giostranti erano attori che rappresentavano i personaggi de' romanzi.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, because these forms of entertainment flourished under the same aristocratic hegemony and were controlled by the same legislation as that to which the comedies were subjected, the impressive success they enjoyed, with their predominance in Brescia over all other dramatic forms, at once corroborates the impression of the firm influence of the nobility over all festive events. Secondly, being

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1. 'Il teatro è nel Rinascimento, inserito nel vasto ambito della celebrazione festiva, anche se la sua funzione tende a specificarsi in maniera sempre più autonoma', Fabrizio Cruciani, Il teatro del Campidoglio e le feste romane del 1513 (Milan, 1968), p. xiii. For examples linking comedies to festivities in sixteenth-century comedy writers, see Turco, Agnella, Prologo, 14-15. Gabiani, I Gelosi, III.4.36-7. Agostino Gallo, Le venti giornate dell'agricoltura et de' piaceri della villa (Venice, 1593, 4th edition), giornata XVIII, p. 346. Pietro Aretino, Il Marescalco, Prologo, in Pietro Aretino, Teatro, edited by Giorgio Petrocchi (Milan, 1971).
  2. Francesco De Sanctis, Storia della letteratura italiana (2 vols, Milan, 1920, reprint of the 1882 edition), I, p. 300.

more richly documented, these forms of entertainment complement the sparse information on the performances of comedy.

In Brescia, about the middle of the sixteenth century, one of the most evident aspects of the increasing monopoly by the aristocracy on festivals and entertainment was the spate of those chivalric allegorical fantasies known as jousts or tournaments<sup>3</sup> which traditionally were the most aristocratic forms of spettacoli.<sup>4</sup> A Brescian of the sixteenth century commended them in this way:

essendo sempre stato costume di questa Città di darsi alle opere virtuose, sette gentil huomini di essa (havendo da venire il Clariss. messer Stephano Thiepolo digniss. Proveditor generale di Terraferma) fecero tra loro una compagnia, e discorrendo con che sorte di piacere potevano riceverlo, e honorarlo, si risolsero, che si facesse la detta giostra, parendo loro fosse cosa piu convenevole e al tempo e alla qualita della persona. 5

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3. For a definition, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo (11 vols, Florence-Rome, 1954-66), IX (1962), pp. 991 ff.
  4. Bongianini Grattarolo, the most well-known literary figure of the Bresciano and one of the first tragedians in the Renaissance, said that the Accademia degli Unanimi in Salò expressed its maturity, becoming 'da fanciulla a donna', as he described it, when it organized 'abattimenti dell'armi', Historia della Riviera di Salò (Brescia, 1599), pp. 78-9. See also the opinion of Elena Povoledo, 'Le théâtre de tournoi en Italie pendant la Renaissance', in Le lieu théâtral à la Renaissance, edited by Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1964), (pp. 95-104), p. 95: 'En organisant la fête guerrière dans le cadre des institutions de la chevalerie et de la féodalité, le Moyen Age l'ordonnait d'après la hiérarchie sociale la plus rigide'. Fritz Saxl offers the following explanation for the revival of jousts in the 16th century: nobles behaved 'as if they were members of King Arthur's Round Table. Hapsburg imperialism and chivalry are inseparable [...]'. Chivalry was the bond which united the aristocracies of Europe in the service of Spanish monarchy', Costumes and Festivals of Milanese Society under Spanish Rule, Annual Italian lecture of the British Academy, 1936, reprinted from the Proceedings of the British Academy (London, 1937), p. 13.
  5. Giangiacomo Segalino, Un breve trattato dell'ordine e successo della giostra (Brescia, 1548). A second edition was printed in Brescia in 1589. Since the pages of this book are not printed, the pagination here and hereafter is my own from the second edition, pp. 1-2.

They were either organised for those sumptuous wedding celebrations where the cavalieri weaved choreographic figures resembling ritual dances, or as separate spettacoli put on to greet famous visiting personaggi, during which the Brescian nobility could display all the wealth and pomp the town could offer. All the traditional varieties of battimenti were set up as a challenge for the noble contestants, all'anello, alla sbarra, palii, castelli, giostre, for the pleasure and nostalgia of jousters, cittadini, and forestieri alike.

As the subsequent records show, there is a coincidence between the peace in 1530 between Venice and the other Italian states (celebrated that year in Bologna with the coronation of the Emperor, Charles V, in the presence of the Pope) and the increase in public feste in Brescia. This was probably caused not only by the increase in wealth brought about by peace in the territories, as historians suggest,<sup>6</sup> but also by the lifting of a decree which had probably prohibited them in previous years. No specific record concerning this has been found, but the Provvisione of the Consiglio Cittadino in 1530, which temporarily rejected the petition to organize such an event,<sup>7</sup> seems to have been the last restraint.

1506 Del 1506. In questo si fece una gran Giostra bandita nella città di Brescia, nela qual se giostrava braccia 25 di Veluto cremesino. 8

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6. Odorici, Storie bresciane, IX, p. 196.

7. Brescia, Queriniana, Provvisioni del Consiglio Cittadino, Provvisione, 19 January 1530, CVII 532, ff.204-5v. For a reference to this document see Storia di Brescia, II, p. 320. For a discussion of this document in relation to other forms of theatre censorship, see ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis and Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo.

8. Bernardino Vallabio, Cronichetta 1506-1530, in Cronache bresciane inedite, II, (1927), p. 171. Around the end of the 19th century Andrea Valentini wrote I duelli e le giostre nella storia di Brescia, but though the index promises interesting descriptions, only the first pages of the whole manuscript are now extant, Brescia, Queriniana, MS\* L.11.6. fascicolo 7.

- 1508 Adì 8 ottobre fo fatta una giostra [...] et ebbe el precio el conte Hercule de Sora: giostrorno la domenega, el lunedì et el martedì, el mercore se corre un altro palio a selle basse.<sup>9</sup>
- 1530 Adì 2 octobrio giostrorno in mercato novo<sup>10</sup> el Conte Zorzo et el Conte Scipion da Martinengo, sustentono el bianco contra sette altri giostradori che sustentavano el negro, et loro haveno lo honore, cioè quelli dal bianco.<sup>11</sup>
- 1531 Magnificent tournaments were organized for the arrival of Alessandro de' Medici.<sup>12</sup>
- 1538 Allì 24 february 1538 in dominica lo conte Laurentio filiolo dil Conte Giovan paulo Capreolo nobel bressano tradusse a marito la Magnifica Madona Nostra, filiola dil Magnifico D. Carolo Averoldo nobel bressano, condotta a cavallo et accompagnata a cavallo da molti gentilhomini cossì bressani come forestieri, precedendo ella quatro mascharati a cavallo ben in ordine, quali andasevano bagordando e rompendo lanze in terra.<sup>13</sup>

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9. Bartolomeo Palazzo, I, p. 258.

10. 'Il Malvezzi (Chronica de rebus Brixian, in Muratori R.J.s tom. XIV) ci avverte che questa piazza [Foro Fortunato] non servi [sic] soltanto per mercato, ma venne altresì usata dalla nobilita pei loro divertimenti, e che ben presto perdette il nome di Foro Fortunato e prese quello di Marcato Novo', Valentini, f. 3.

11. Bartolomeo Palazzo, I, p. 344. According to Carlo Pasero this was the joust organized for the peace of Bologna and prohibited in the Provvisione of 19 January 1530, see Storia di Brescia, II, p. 320 n., 3; for the Provvisione, see above n., 7; but in Bartolomeo Palazzo's work, quoted also by Pasero, there is no evidence of this; in fact it may have been organized for different reasons.

12. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 373-4 and n., 1.

13. Tommaso Mercanda, Cronaca 1532-1546, in Cronache bresciane inedite, I, p. 155.

The same mascarati are described in more detail by another chronicler, Pandolfo Nassino, who was also a guest at the wedding,

vene incontro a Cavallo doi vestiti de Sarazini et  
doy ala turchesca cu lanzi spezando i terra et fo  
bello vedere.<sup>14</sup>

These oriental costumes were often part of the scenography during the Renaissance<sup>15</sup> and we find them described again in detail in the famous joust of 1548 which will be presented later in this list of records.

1543 Allì 4 de february 1543 in dominica intrò in Bressa [...] la Magnifica et elegante giovena Madona Leonera de casa Gonzaga moglie del Magn. d. Hieronimo Martinengo nobel bressano, vestuda de raso bianco, a cavallo com li capelli destesi et bereta de veludo biancha in testa [...] precedendo ella molti primari gioveni di la cità a cavalli facendo bagordi et rompendo lanze in terra.<sup>16</sup>

For this wedding the scenario writer also devised a siege with the subsequent release of the bride, as Mercanda informs us: after the procession moved from Mantua, at the entrance of Brescia,

questi gentilhomini bresani se posero a corer et romper lanze [...]. Intrati che fussemo il ponte, dal castelan fu fato serar la porta, dicendo che la sposa era prigioniera, et in un trato feze far alcuni bali; et la sposa bella gentile et liberale da una de bрази si levò una colana dorà di più de ducati. 35., et la donò a deto castelano.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Brescia, Queriniana, Pandolfo Nassino, Registro di memorie, monumenti, e famiglie bresciane 1522-1542, C.I.15, MS, f.253.

15. Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, I, pp. 994-5.

16. Mercanda, I, p. 116.

17. From a letter written by Hieronimo Contarini, Capitano of Brescia, (Capitano was the title of one of the Rettori) to Hieronimo Martinengo, his father in law. The letter, seven densely printed pages, gives a detailed description of all the apparati for the wedding, see Le sontuosissime nozze di Hieronimo Martinengo, 1543, edited by Emilio Lovarini (Cividale del Friuli, 1912), p. 15.



- 1545 Nel mese di feb.ro si corsi alla giostra allo Incontro sul prato senza teli, et tuti feceno assai male.<sup>18</sup>
- 1547 Alli 10 lulio si corse allo anello [...] li gioveni nobili corsero et no altri.<sup>19</sup>
- 1548 Alli 5 febraro si corse allo anello in marchato novo mascharati gioveni al numero 13 in una colonna.<sup>20</sup>
- 1548 El dì seguente [14th February 1548] se combattete su la piazza del Domo.<sup>21</sup>
- 1548 De maggio [20th] il giorno de Pasca rosata fù fatto nella Città di Brescia al mercato novo una giostra bandita con tanta solennità di pompa, e sopra vesti di cavallieri come di cavalli, quanto fosse mai fatto giostra in Italia.<sup>22</sup>

This joust, organised for the entrance of Stefano Tiepolo, the Magnifico Provveditore Generale della Terraferma, must have impressed the contemporary chroniclers as Ludovico Caravaggi<sup>23</sup> also mentions it. The interest in these tournaments, as well as the prestige which the participants and the town derived from them, is proved from the accounts which were printed immediately afterwards. In Brescia, with strong pressure from the powerful figure of Domenico Veniero, the camarlingo,

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18. Brescia, the State Archives, Ludovico Caravaggi, Cronica de Bressa (it covers the years 1539-69), Op. Q. 18, MS, f.46.
19. Ibid., f. 47. Giostra all'anello: un giostratore a cavallo doveva, di gran carriera, scagliare la lancia attraverso un anello (fisso o mobile)', Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, IX, p. 993.
20. Caravaggi, f. 81v.
21. Bartolomeo Palazzo, II, p. 385; this joust was recorded also by Caravaggi who adds that it was 'alla sbarra', f. 81v. For a definition of this kind of joust, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, IX, p. 993. 'Alla barriera: quando in mezzo al campo veniva eretta una lizza (o barriera, o sbarra), cioè una lunga tramezza di tela o di legno [...] gli avversari dovevano correre [...] lungo la lizza e colpirsi al di sopra di essa.'
22. Vallabio, II, p. 179.
23. Caravaggi, f. 82.

(treasurer of the Serenissima), and under the auspices of the local literary circles, the first edition of a pamphlet describing the joust came out a few months later, on the 8th of October with the title,

Un breve trattato di M. Gioan Giacomo Segalino dell'ordine e successo della giostra fatta nella città di Brescia a 20 maggio del 48. nel quale si descriveno i motti, e le livree, cosi de cavalieri, come di altri gentilhuomini che hebbero qualche carico in quella, con molte altre cose degne, e dilettevoli.<sup>24</sup>

- 1550    Alli 9 feb.ro mr Gio. Battista Gavardo et marcantonio Calino, si furno mantenitori di giostra allo incontro a cinque cavrieri, et a campo aperto con lo stocco, et a piedi alla sbarra, in ogni cosa si concorreva lo amor, et fu assai bella cosa a vedere.<sup>25</sup>
- 1554    Adi 22 di Giugno. M. Francesco Venier fu fatto duce in Venezia e la Mag. Comunità di Brescia, per la grandissima allegrezza, che hebbe di esso Duce, in sul mercato novo fece far un castello di legname, cinto di muraglia di pietra viva [...]. Adi I Luglio fu fatto il battimento de ditto Castello.<sup>26</sup>

As the preceding records show, jousts did not originate suddenly

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24. See above, n., 5. In a letter printed at the end of his description, dated 26 June 1548, Giangiacomo Segalino apologizes for being late in submitting it. Domenico Veniero's desire to read about the joust is witnessed by the words of the dedicatory letter to Un breve trattato: 'Molto Magnifico messer Dominico patron mio sempre osservandiss. havendomi fatto saper [...] che essa haverebbe havuto appiacere, che io le havessi scritto l'ordine, e modo della Giostra fatta a venti di Maggio prossimo [...]', p. I. It is interesting that also the dedicatory letter to the play I Gelosi by Gabiani is addressed to Domenico Veniero. Evidence of the interest of the local letterati in this joust is given by the second dedicatory letter to Un breve trattato. It is addressed to Gioan Battista Luzzago, author of Lettere consolatorie; for his position in Brescia, see Storia di Brescia, II, p. 518.
25. Caravaggi, -f. 102. 'Si concorreva lo amor': it is probably the title of the cartello which expressed the reason for the challenge. It could be for the beauty of a woman or the glory of the family, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, IX, p. 994.
26. Vallabio, II, pp. 184-5. This castello is mentioned on a different day (8 July) by Ludovico Caravaggi, f. 157v. For the development of this pageant-joust into an authentic theatre form, see Povoledo, op. cit.

around the middle of the century, but were popular at the beginning of the Cinquecento, and even in the Quattrocento.<sup>27</sup> However between 1530 and 1550 there was a noticeable increase in their number, and their splendour and fasto reached a climax.

Above all they indicate a clear division between popular and aristocratic entertainment. These tournaments were the prerogative of the nobility. Only the nobles or gentiluomini were the protagonists, the 'actors' of these performances. The lower and middle classes were excluded from any active participation.<sup>28</sup> 'I signori giostranti' is the recurrent definition to indicate those troupes (the knight and his team)<sup>29</sup> who performed as the Compagnie di comici in the various piazze of Italy when the cities organized public occasions to celebrate for victories, ingressi, and weddings. Ludovico Mantegna thus writes from Val Camonica (a valley near Brescia) to Francesco Gonzaga on the 10th of May, 1497, on the occasion of the visit of Caterina Cornaro:

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27. A joust was organized at the end of the 15th century: 'Fu pubblicata una giostra ed invitati a correrla la nobile gioventù', Odorici, Storie bresciane, VIII, (1860), p. 323. There was also a joust among the multiple entertainments to receive Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus, in 1497: 'E propose di corrersi alla giostra per molti dì perchè a piacere di questa regina non mancasse cosa alcuna, un pallio di panno d'oro di grandissimo prezzo [...] . e accomodarono i palchi in guisa d'Anfiteatro, perchè meglio veder si potesse questo spettacolo, nella piazza grande. Inteso ciò Galeazzo Sanseverino venne con molti giostranti da Milano a Brescia', Elia Cavriolo, Delle historie bresciane di M. Helia Cavriolo, libri dodeci fatti volgari da Patrizio Spini (Brescia, 1585), pp. 216-77.

28. Jacques Heers, Fêtes, jeux et joutes dans les sociétés d'occident à la fin du Moyen Age (Paris, 1971), pp. 36-7.

29. For an accurate and precise description of the composition and order of a jousting team, see Segalino, op. cit.

Si fera una giostra io vi aspetto per farsi un vero incontro perchè la mia comunità vi mandara ad farvi honoro.<sup>30</sup>

The success and the importance of the spettacolo depended on the number and on the rango of the cavalieri, and it was from the very presence of the nobility that the tournament received fame and prestige<sup>31</sup> in the same way as the reputation of the actors would raise the valuation of a comedy, with the performers appearing not as untrained dilettanti, but always as professional.

Moreover, in relation to the theatre, it is relevant to note that by the middle of the century a transformation had definitely taken place in the performance of jousts: genuine competition had given way to aesthetic pleasure; jousts held the attention of the audience for their apparati, the elegance of the costumes, the style and grace of the jousters' movements. As Elena Povoledo says,

le combat entre chevaliers s'alignait sur les modes les plus évolués et spectaculaires des divertissements de cour, en se dédoublant en deux éléments bien définis [...] le combat et la fête [...] la partie plus particulièrement spectaculaire du tournoi de la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle [est] le prologue récité et l'apparat.<sup>32</sup>

In Brescia there are records of actual contests until 1506 when

si venero a' ferir con tanta furia, ch'el Bona gettò  
il Nicolizza for di sella tramortito, e egli solo  
n'ebbe l'honore. 33

But in the following years all descriptions by the local chroniclers concentrate on the choreographic dexterity and the magnificence of the

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30. Mantua, the State Archives, Archivio Patrio Gonzaga, Esterni, n° XLVIII n° 2. 1599, MSS.

31. Segalino, p. 2.

32. Povoledo, p. 98.

33. Vallabio, II, p. 171.

armour which would arouse even the admiration of the gods, as it was sung in the poems of the contemporary aedi who celebrated their deeds:

L'almo di, che la giostra ricca tanto  
Raccese in Brescia mille fiamme spente,  
La bella dea di Cipro, e Marte ardente  
Sceser dal ciel qua giù tra gioia, e canto,  
E mentre ambi a mirar stanno da canto  
La pompa, e l'un', [ sic ] a l'altro si consente,  
Che tra la degna, e ben guarnita gente  
Carlo sol via ne porti 'l pregio, e'l vanto [...].<sup>34</sup>

Domenico Veniero who insisted on a printed description of the 1548 joust, also insisted that he should be informed about 'l'ordine e modo della Giostra', and not about the actual phases of the competition.<sup>35</sup>

G. Giacomo Segalino complied with his wishes, devoting his fifty pages to descriptions of the armour, motti and livree of all the participants leaving out no detail. Here is one of his accounts of the armour:

Il signor Lodovico Martinengo, e il signor Leandro Averoldo  
havevano le corazze di vel d'oro in campo incarnato cremisino  
stampato a bellissimo disegno, intorno delle quali erano  
fimbrie di cuoio incarnato con teste diverse sopra di relevo  
indorate, e rabeschini d'oro su pel rimanente di esse, e nel  
petto teste similmente rilevate, e dorate, dalle quali  
uscivano certi ornamenti a rilievo dorati, che con alcuni  
rivolgimenti si estendevano intorno delle mamme, e sulle  
spalle due altre, alle quali erano attaccati manti del  
medesimo vel d'oro alla imperiale.<sup>36</sup>

These exclusive forms of entertainment appealed for their aesthetic splendour and for their ritualistic element. As rites, they were performed for specific occasions, but also seem to have been designed in order to re-create a past for which there was nostalgia. The time 'd'arme e d'amor', re-lived through the epic poems of Ariosto and

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34. A sonnet by an unknown author which Giangiacomo Segalino chose to print at the end of his own description of the joust of 1548. See n., 24 of this chapter.

35. Segalino quite explicitly says, 'Questi sono i tredici Cavalieri, che nel sopradetto modo si appresentarono, le prodezze, e portamenti de quali nō starò a raccontare', p. 36.

36. Segalino, p. 41.

Boiardo, was staged in reality according to precise rules and ancient details.

Fritz Saxl sees in the historical context of the time, in particular the wars against the Turks, the cause of this seeking after the myth:

In costume and demeanour, our noblemen wanted to resemble the great knights of old, as Ariosto had revived them for Italy [...]. Chivalry was developed in the fight against the infidel. [...] When in Charles V's time chivalry is revived, the serious background of this revival can be easily guessed. The European mind is filled with horror of the Turk.<sup>37</sup>

And the world of the Moors, of the Saracens appearing in costume, and the jousters in their attire in the processions for the weddings, anticipated the Commedia dell'Arte whose actors would cover their faces with masks and their bodies with vestimenti alla moresca in order to perform the moro. A dance called moresca was also often introduced in comedies as an intermezzo, as for instance in L'Amor Costante by Alessandro Piccolomini. And I Gelosi, the Brescian play by Gabiani, also presented a moresca as an interlude.

A more dramatized form of these evocative rites which staged the adventures of Orlando were the castelli. The Enciclopedia dello spettacolo defines them as 'forme arcaiche',<sup>38</sup> but this makes more significant the enthusiasm with which they were applauded until as late as the middle of the sixteenth century. Other evidence of the alienation of the classi popolari from the most noted forms of entertainment and subsequently their inability to take active part in them is revealed by the evolution of the trionfi. Although not performed as frequently as the joust, which was mainly organized to celebrate the

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37. Saxl, pp. 15-16.

38. IX, pp. 993-4.

arrival of members of the religious hierarchy from Venice, the difference between the trionfi recorded at the end of the fifteenth century and those to the middle and end of the sixteenth, is important.

In the trionfo in honour of Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus, on her famous Brescian visit, (1497), there is a chariot on which a pagan Rappresentazione was played by living figures. It was staged by the community and its clumsy or inexperienced style aroused the laughter and scorn of Ludovico Mantegna, son of the great Mantegna, as we know from the previously quoted letter he wrote to the Marchese Francesco Gonzaga, (10 May 1497)

La Comunità aspetta questa Regina di Cipro co molto desiderio: per farli honore ogniuno pesca nove fantasie in modu che io sto indubio qod racione gofforum ingeniorum gli astanti rideranno perchè una dea diana andara incontro alla regina racione castitatis et seravi un cupido spogliato da certe nimphe, e la quale cosa Venus intesa la villania facta al suo figliolo fara el bordello, onde che insino bacho scopia de le risa.<sup>39</sup>

But already by 1532 the apparati had become more modest,<sup>40</sup> and later the allegorical significance of the scenes of the Rappresentazioni had been transferred into the static symbolic figures of the triumphal arches. An anonymous chronicler of the time has left us a description of the 'Ingresso' of the Cardinal Andrea Cornaro from Venice, 29 July 1546. Five gigantic arches are described in detail together with their symbolic figures and relative inscriptions. There were

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39. Mantua, the State Archives, Archivio Patrio Gonzaga, Esterni, n<sup>o</sup>. XLVIII n., 2. 1599 MSS. This part of the letter is also quoted by Alessandro Luzio, 'Il carteggio estero de' Gonzaga, affari in Brescia', in L'Archivio Gonzaga di Mantova (2 vols, Verona, 1920-22), II, p. 239, n., 6.

40. The description of the entrance of the Venetian Cardinal Francesco Cornaro (23 June 1532) is taken from the 16th century description by Pandolfo Nassino quoted by Paolo Guerrini, 'L'ingresso episcopale in Brescia dei due cardinali veneti Francesco e Andrea Cornaro', Brixia Sacra, 1917 (pp. 1-100), p. 7

figure cristiane di martiri protettori e quelle delle virtù teologali [...] illustrate con figure pagane e rievocazioni di storia romana .<sup>41</sup>

The clumsy actors mocked by Ludovico Mantegna had become pictorial images.

In architectural terms, the reciprocal influence between all forms of entertainment and the visual arts, has been well studied and documented.<sup>42</sup> What has been less discussed are the implications in the history of the theatre in the Cinquecento of the transition from a live form of dramatization to a representation, of the same mythical stories, made with 'sculptured' or painted figures. This transition represented a moment of anti-dramatization, a movement from active into visual art which, not by chance, coincided with a period of formalization of ideas, the Counter-Reformation. For the theatre the adoption of the static trionfo was a form of 'censorship' because it provided the opportunity to crystallize and control the interpretations of the stories more than a live performance did. In other words, it represented a weapon against free creativity and spontaneous forms of theatrical expression. It also avoided the burden of checking the scenari of the actors, as testified by episodes in the famous struggle between Cardinal Borromeo and the comic troupes.<sup>43</sup> This anti-dramatic movement is another example of the war against the popularization of the theatre.

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41. Guerrini, 'L'ingresso episcopale in Brescia dei due cardinali veneti Francesco e Andrea Cornaro', p. 12. The use of 'archi trionfali con pitture' in substitution for more 'live' theatrical activities is recorded in Salò in 1598 for the visit of Maria d'Austria, Grattarolo, p. 18.

42. For a summary of the various studies, see Encyclopedia of World Art, edited by the Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, Venice-Rome (New York, Toronto, London, 1959-68), I, p. 789.

43. For information concerning Cardinal Borromeo's attempt to control the scenari of the Gelosi, see D'Ancona, II, p. 472.



The fact that the same stories of religious or pagan myths were no longer conveyed through words and gestures, but were interpreted through images, is closely related to the basic principle according to which, it was up to an exclusively privileged intellectual and inspired minority to give the correct interpretation. And one may suggest the triumphal arch was appreciated as the most valuable form of apparato, precisely because of the dual possibility of interpretation it offered.

In a booklet called Il sontuoso apparato fatto dalla magnifica città di Brescia nel felice ritorno dell'Ill. e Reverendiss. Vescovo suo il Cardinal Morosini con la spositione de' sensi simbolici che in esso si contengono,<sup>44</sup> a lengthy description of the ostentatious welcome given to the Cardinal in 1591, the author, probably a Brescian nobleman, defines 'questa maniera dunque di ricevere de' Principi, con apparato di Archi, e di Figure,' as the most valuable form, since it afforded the possibility of an ambiguous interpretation. It catered for the needs of the 'vulgo' who, 'con l'apparato magnifico, e con la varietà delle cose, vien sodisfarsi al gusto popolare, il quale di queste cose esterne de' sensi si pasce',<sup>45</sup> and at the same time it allowed 'gli ingegnosi di speculare, e di gir trovando di sè quello, che, sotto que' simboli tralucendo, par di nascondersi!'<sup>46</sup> In support of this clear-cut argument, the author refers to Aristotle, and devotes his pen to detailed description of the figures, to the interpretation of the symbols, and to the reason why 'si usino i segni simbolici, et si facciano gli archi ne' trionfi.'<sup>47</sup>

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44. (Brescia, 1591). The author is not acknowledged, but the dedicatory letter is signed Alfonso Capriolo.

45. Ibid., p. 9.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., pp.9 ff.

The trend against the live 'uncontrollable' element in entertainment towards the end of the century also appears in tournaments. In Salò in 1563, there are recorded jousts with 'cavalli finti', organised for the arrival of a group of famous guests, including the Cardinal of Augusta.<sup>48</sup>

In order to visualize the atmosphere in which comedy productions grew up, because of the scarcity of documents on the subject and the brevity of those records that are available, a survey of the festivities in Brescia also has to include the spettacoli which were organised in other towns in the province. These sometimes surpassed those in Brescia and even those in the Serenissima itself.

Salò was the most important centre, and because of its splendid geographical position, climate, industries<sup>49</sup> and landscape, throughout the Renaissance it attracted endless praise particularly as a budding centre of academic institutions. Bongianni Grattarolo's description seems to be taken from one of the many essays on bucolic landscape in the golden age which were so fashionable and sought after in the Renaissance courts.<sup>50</sup> Agostino Gallo (a Brescian nobleman and also the author of lost comedies) calls it

sito amenissimo; si per le purgatissime aere, et per la bellezza di quei ben' ordinati giardini, come anchor per la vaghezza di quei fertili colli, et di quel sì grande, sì profondo, et sì superbo lago Benaco intorniato da tante belle ville, et da vaghi monti forniti di [...] vari rari alberi fruttiferi, et in gran parte di praterie, che per molti mesi pascono infiniti animali.<sup>51</sup>

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48. Grattarolo, p. 46.

49. Gallo praising the economic, industrial and agricultural wealth of Brescia, adds: 'Medesimamente si può dire delle meravigliose doti della tua Riviera Salodiana, la quale produce gran quantità di vini olij [...] e ricca di cedri, limoni, et aranzi. Cedri poi, che avanzano in bontà tutti gli altri d'Italia', Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, MS, p. 20.

50. Grattarolo, pp. 30 ff.

51. Gallo, Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, MS, pp. 3 ff.

And this atmosphere provided,

prospettive veramente attissime per satisfacer ogni insatiabil occhi, per pascere ogni dilicato intelletto, et per recreare ogni gentilissimo spirito.<sup>52</sup>

The cultural activities of the town were fostered by several academic centres and cultural institutions, such as the Accademia degli Unanimi, a Collegio di Nodari, a Collegio di Giudici e Cancellieri<sup>53</sup> and 'molte scole dove vengono anco molti forestieri ad imparare scienze'.<sup>54</sup>

There was also,

un Collegio di Dottori honoratissimo, dove non si ammette alcuno senza diligẽte esaminatione, e alle volte è avenuto che delli approvati, e accettati dai Colleggi di Padova e di Bologna, e di Pavia, sono stati refiutati e riprovati da questo.<sup>55</sup>

Salò and its letterati vied with Brescia and other towns of the Veneto to entertain celebrated royalty and members of the Imperial family who frequently journeyed along the lake on their travels from the southern part of the Empire (Italy, Spain) to its northern regions. These visits saw the arrival of large delegations from the most important Renaissance towns coming to pay homage to the illustrious visitors.

Unfortunately there are few detailed records available to describe the festivals organized on these occasions.<sup>56</sup> However, from the little evidence that is available, it is feasible to imagine that some of them

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52. Gallo, Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, MS, pp. 3 ff.

53. Grattarolo, p. 78.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. The archives of the Biblioteca dell'Ateneo of Salò have been rifled during the past centuries by eager researchers; only recently an inventory has been made and according to it there are no documents of interest on this topic.

even competed with Venice. The lagoon was a sensational natural stage for water processions and pageants, and the Serenissima astounded foreign and Italian visitor alike with its elaborate and fantastic masterpieces of the imagination which gave the town the look of a fairy-land. Yet, at least on one occasion, Salò probably held its own. For the visit of the Reverendissimo Cardinal of Augusta, the Eccellentissimo Duke of Mantua and other distinguished guests, a mascherata was organized representing the Lake of Garda or Benaco, and the various villages and local trades paying homage to the visitors. Unfortunately the description of Bongianini Grattarolo is very brief:

Et in una mascherata introdotto il Benaco coperto di Musco, e cinto di canucchie, e la Riviera di frondi verdeggianti non pur con le sue Quadre ma con tutti i suoi comuni, dato à ciascuno la persona e l'habito, che al suo decoro si apparteneva, i quali gli appresentarono chi pesci, chi chiocciolate [...].<sup>57</sup>

And in Desenzano near Sirmione, Mary of Austria, daughter of Charles V, wife of Maximilian and mother of the Emperor Rudolph, passing on her way to Portugal from Germany, was welcomed with,

gratissimi spettacoli di torneamenti, e di bagordi, e di guerra navale; accompagnandola per tutte le Rive, tanto quanto essa la puote vedere, così andando, come stando fuori [...]. Essa stessa hebbè a dire che non havea havuto spettacolo, che più li fosse andato à gusto di questo.<sup>58</sup>

Another piece of evidence to demonstrate how the presence of water

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57. Grattarolo, p. 46. For a definition of a mascherata, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, VII, (1960), p. 238: 'Nel Rinascimento le m. divennero in tutta Europa ingrediente consueto delle feste di palazzo [...] in cui l'allegorismo moralistico di sapore medievale cede a poco a poco il passo alla rappr. [sic] mimata di scene tolte dalla mitologia o dalla storia greca e romana'. It is also interesting the observation that 'devono essere considerate essenzialmente dal punto di vista spettacolare e cioè in funzione di un pubblico non direttamente partecipante', *ibid.*

58. Grattarolo, p. 18.

inspired the fantasia of the Renaissance scenographers<sup>59</sup> comes from the Lake of Idro. Even in the deep mountain valleys surrounding the town, which, since the Middle Ages, had been the most important centre for armour and weapons, every occasion for a festival was seized upon. The diaries of the local Pluda interrupt their remarks on the climate and the harvest and other agricultural matters to note that one winter it was so cold that,

zelete il lago de Ider talmente che li conti da Lodro ge fece far una festa sopra dita lago in sula giaz in memoria de tal cosa. 60

Against the background of these entertainments and the occasions for which they were performed, it is not difficult to imagine the sixteenth-century Brescian society of which they were the expression. It is the picture of a 'theatrical' style of life which manifested itself in spectacular and magnificent displays of wealth, with an exteriorization of the beautiful and the grandiose. These festivities also reveal Brescia's attempt to compete with the pomp and luxury of the major cities nearby, and its frantic desire to keep up with the famous Renaissance feste, which were financed by the vast wealth and large patrimonies of some of the families. And in fact the Gambara, the Averoldi, and the Capriolo, the richest and most prominent families of Brescia, are often mentioned at the beginning of the century in relation to the cultural life of the town as well as to the production of plays. A contemporary noble wrote at that time that,

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59. The Arno was used to stage naval battles. A.N. Nagler uses this happy expression: 'Even the Arno was frequently turned into a theatre', Theatre Festivals of the Medici (New-Haven, London, 1964), p. 2.

60. Diari di Pluda di Castenedolo 1542-1651 (hereafter Diari di Pluda), II, (1927) p. 346. The Pluda were farmers with the direct management of their own fields, see the introduction by Guarrini the editor of their diaries. Gallo gives the following description of the lake of Idro: 'Parimenti vi è il bel lago d'Idro il quale anchor che sia più tosto di picciolo, che di grandi, nondimeno è maraviglioso; si per esser circondato, per diciotto miglio, da monti alti, ardui, pendenti, et minacciosi, come anchor perché è talmente situato, che si può con un sol guardo considerar la sua tranquillità, la lunghezza et larghezza, Lodi di Brescia e suo territorio, MS, p. 3v.

veramente che quei Signori sono copiosi di boschi grandi, e di possessioni fertili, che sono il fiore del Bresciano. Ma più si può dire, che si come quella antichissima Famiglia la più ricca di possessioni di tutte l'altre della Patria, stando che ogni anno passa di entrate scudi ottantamila.<sup>61</sup>

And later on, in 1567, Francesco Tagliapietra reports that 'sono alcuni di loro molto ricchi, et commodi, hanno grossissime entrate de possessione'.<sup>62</sup> Moreover contemporary and past local historians find reliable sources to support the thesis that peace brought prosperity, and that the town enjoyed an economic and a population boom during the domination of Venice.<sup>63</sup> Sixteenth-century documents record the astonished and reproachful attitude of the observers confronted with the luxurious standard of living. Right in the middle of the century, Catterino Zen, one of the Rettori, reports to Venice that

tutti li habitanti gentilhomeni cittadini et d'ogni qualita vestono honoratamente sede d'ogni sorte et massime veluti quali fanno venire da zenova e da Milano [...] tengono gran numero di cavalli d'ogni sorte corsieri zanetti, turchi, chinee, cortaldi, carretti con belli corrieri, cocchi con belle cavalle, letiche con belli muli, servitori assai.<sup>64</sup>

When looking at the contemporary theatre it is important to note that the Bresciani felt the overpowering need to demonstrate their wealth and transform it into forms which would attract the eye. There is no lack of sixteenth-century reports describing this translation of riches

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61. Gallo, Le venti giornate, p. 354.

62. Relazioni di Rettori, p. 104

63. The Rettore Francesco Tagliapietra wrote in 1567: 'menano una vita molto felice, et ioconda, lontani dai romori et strepiti di guerra', Relazioni di Rettori, p. 105. For a more detailed and accurate picture, see Storia di Brescia, pp. 331 ff.

64. Relazioni di Rettori pp. 67-8.

into public exhibitions through the external decoration of palaces, and through internal furnishing of reception halls. The same luxury was displayed in the splendour of the dresses, in the jewellery of the women and in their retinue of ladies in waiting and servants.<sup>65</sup>

These costumi reveal a style of life which indicates a common and strongly felt passion for outward show and exhibition, and a public for whom an embryonic form of spettacolo<sup>66</sup> was staged. Likewise what appealed to the sensibility of a Renaissance audience of festivals and plays were the luxurious decorations and the sumptuousness of the apparati.

The emphasis that has been laid on the aristocratic monopoly of these entertainments has been necessary in order to help explain the lack of local artistic forms with clear, regional, Brescian characteristics. For, in the Renaissance, the term 'aristocratic' was the very antithesis of provincial, regional or indigenous. With its greater mobility the aristocratic class was the best, if not the only, channel through which new fashions, styles and concepts penetrated and filtered from one state to another. It follows, therefore, that it would be very unlikely that there would be differences in any cultural expression emanating from such a class.<sup>67</sup>

Social origin was therefore one of the causes which hindered the birth of local artistic forms with clear regional Brescian characteristics.

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65. Francesco Bettoni, 'La nobiltà bresciana', Brixia, 1882, pp. 90-113. Agostino Zanelli, Delle condizioni interne di Brescia dal 1426 al 1644 (Brescia, 1868) expanded into Delle condizioni interne di Brescia dal 1426 al 1644 e del moto della borghesia contro la nobiltà nel 1644 (Brescia, 1898), p. 141, where Bettoni is quoted at length. See also, Relazioni di Rettori, p. 104.

66. For the etymological sense of the word from the latin spettare, see Niccolò Tommaseo and Bernardo Bellini, Dizionario della lingua italiana (6 vols, Turin, 1929), ad vocem.

67. Ventura, pp. 287-8.

This is a phenomenon which is of interest to a study of the theatre because it is linked with the absence of a local dialect and of every other regional element in the comedies written by Brescian playwrights. It also explains why these playwrights modelled their plays on those of Tuscan and Veneto authors.

Two factors, one psychological, the other political, may have induced the Brescian nobility to reject local traditions and features. The first interpretation is supported by a nineteenth-century Brescian historian, Agostino Zanelli, who explained the pomp and the excessive ostentation of the Bresciani as an effort to keep up with other courts, particularly with Venice. According to Agostino Zanelli, it was a sign of an inferiority complex, an expression of the frustration deriving from the loss of political power:

Se dalla guerra di Cambray la repubblica di Venezia era uscita indebolita, dal grande conflitto tra la Francia e la Spagna la patria nostra era uscita colla perdita della indipendenza, soggetta quasi interamente ad una monarchia bigotta, esosa e corruttrice. E [...] i patrizi furono fatalmente trascinati dalla scemata importanza politica, dalla smania di emergere in altro modo e dalle stesse loro ricchezze a seguire l'esempio della nobiltà spagnola, a cercare quindi nella pompa della vita privata, nelle feste, nei conviti [...] nelle gare di preminenza [...] 68 i modi per mantenere quel prestigio a cui tanto tenevano.

This thesis is corroborated by the behaviour of the Venetian patricians in the towns of the Terraferma where they lodged in the best palaces, often displaying their wealth almost offensively.<sup>69</sup>

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68. Zanelli, Delle condizioni interne di Brescia, p. 140 (my italics). See also Heers, p. 79.

69. Ventura, pp. 173-6.



This psychological interpretation by Agostino Zanelli may be supplemented by the one which takes into consideration the political importance attributed by Venice to the display of pomp and luxury. For the Venetian government the display of pomp and luxury meant a display of power. It was this belief that promoted the famous, magnificent parades along the Canal Grande.

Hence the Serenissima saw the celebrations organized by the authorities of the Terraferma as an act of submission and reverence to the Dominante, and consequently a further manifestation of its strength directed towards the other states.

Sometimes the Rettori would openly manifest their appreciation, as is documented in their letters to Venice, for instance, this summary by Romolo Putelli:

1545 settembre 13. I Rettori bresciani scrivono lettere a Venezia dichiarando che ser Alvise Gonzaga era ben trattato in Città e ch'egli era contento dell'amicizia colla Serenissima.<sup>70</sup>

Brescia was aware of this 'desire' of the Venetians and in order to satisfy it, exceptions to the sumptuary laws were allowed for expenditure on public entertainments:

Grandissimi apparati e smisurate spese [...] quali richiedeva il decoro della città e del dominio veneziano [were organized]. Le leggi suntuarie, moderatrici del lusso, per quei giorni e per tal gente non parvero esistere più.<sup>71</sup>

In fact the laws were officially lifted, as was specifically decreed in one capitolo of the Consiglio Comunale (12 March 1548),<sup>72</sup> for the entrance of the highest Venetian representative Stefano Tiepolo, for

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70. Romolo Putelli, Storie bresciane e bergamasche. Da inediti documenti del R. Archivio di Stato in Venezia (Bresso, 1924), p. 174. On the diplomatic importance Venice gave to festivals, see Molmenti, part II, II, p. 94.

71. Lovarini, 'Introduzione' to Le sontuosissime nozze di Hieronimo Martinengo, p. 10.

72. Andrea Cassa, Funerali pompe e conviti. Escursione nel Vecchio Archivio Municipale (Brescia, 1887), p. 126.

whom the famous joust had been organized.

This competition with Venice, which would not have tolerated a graceless and shapeless pageantry in a folk tradition that would have damaged and humiliated the prestige and fame of both towns, furthered the adoption of well tested and approved spettacoli, and offers an explanation for the introduction and *development* of the erudite theatre of imitation.

Apart from their intrinsic value these records pertaining to tournaments and jousts are thus relevant to a study on comedy in that they confirm a deeply rooted desire for entertainment and also indicate the extent of the town's skill in organizing festivities which would not disappoint the expectations of famous visitors.

The importance of these records is demonstrated more fully in the following chapters for these reasons: that both tournaments and comedies were firmly controlled by the nobility and that the middle classes were not involved in any way in these social practices; that both comedies and tournaments were intended to celebrate the arrival of foreign guests; that the same restricted circles of noblemen were responsible for organizing and performing in these activities; that the Brescian nobility maintained close links with the aristocracy of the major Italian towns, thus proving their concern for broadening their cultural exchanges beyond the territories more immediately sensitive to the influence of the Serenissima.

Of even greater importance is the fact that around the middle of the sixteenth century a cluster of both tournaments and plays were sponsored by the same circle of literary and political figures among which the name of Domenico Veniero, the Venetian camarlingo was much in evidence.<sup>73</sup> His presence assumes particular significance because

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73. See above, n., 24; chs 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' n., 18 and 'Vincenzo Gabiani', n., 8-9 of this thesis.

as it will be pointed out in the chapter on comedies, the Venetian authorities seem to have fulfilled the role of mecenati in promoting both joustings and comedies. This function is further elaborated in the chapter on theatrical legislation where it becomes evident that tournaments were approved through the same legislative procedure as established for comedies, which ultimately required the Venetian government seal of approval.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, the high incidence of these spettacoli and the lavishness of their mise en scène stress in the same way as do comedies the limited number and the poverty of the 'popular entertainments' in Brescia and the Bresciano.

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74. See ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis, n., 6.

## Comedies Performed in Brescia

Although Brescia can claim among its literary figures one of the best-known tragedians of the Renaissance, Bongianni Grattarolo, who lived and worked as accademico and dramatist in Salò, no record of performances of tragedy has yet been found in Brescia and its province, except for an ambiguous statement by Grattarolo himself. Describing the activities of an academy in Salò he refers to their 'gratiosi spettacoli, di sene e di altro';<sup>1</sup> the word sene may stand for scene<sup>2</sup> or perhaps for Seneca. Neither these nor other performances are mentioned in the short work on Brescian tragedy, Della tragedia bresciana, by Ugo Vaglia.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, there are a number of records of comedies performed in Brescia. Unfortunately no chronicler preserved the same accurate and fascinating accounts of the productions as were written for the weddings or the jousts. So we cannot learn of their costumes, scenari and intermezzi, as we can of those of similar performances in the nearby Mantua, thanks to the correspondence of Isabella Gonzaga.<sup>4</sup> What Brescian chroniclers wrote were dry, laconic notes, most of the time without the title or the author of the play. Very often references to comedies are casually

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1. Grattarolo, p. 78. (my italics).
  2. D'Ancona, II, p. 454.
  3. (Brescia, 1956).
  4. D'Ancona, II, pp. 379ff.

given as if they were but an intermezzo of a whole set of entertainments organized for one important occasion by some noble family, and the diarist seems more concerned with the dress and display of jewellery, than with the performance. For example, Nicola Bargnani writing to Auriga Gambara, promises that he will give 'aviso secõdo passeno le cose et nova foja et novo vestimento che se mostrano'.<sup>5</sup>

The occasion he refers to is the wedding of Federico Gambara, and he adds some details he has already noticed during the first part of the festivities:

raso alexandrino cum tella d'oro cum cordoni d'oro  
accompagnati de setta de quello medemo collore cum  
una collana bella dono de valuta circha a 300 scudi  
a mio iudicio cum anelli belli [...] e li se ballava  
[...] domane ge sera una Comedia ala nocte ge dice  
che sara bella. 6

But in most cases the habitual chronicle remains silent on the subject of comedies. Reports about wars, famines and sieges are there, with all the accompanying horrors, but there is no mention of the cancellation of a play on account of a sudden calamity, or the destruction of a place usually allocated for the production of comedies.

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5. Brescia, Queriniana, Carteggi Gambara, uncatalogued, a letter from Nicola Bargnani to Auriga Gambara, 9 June 1511, MS. In the catalogues of the Queriniana there is an index of the huge mass of Carteggi Gambara, but it is not traceable at present. Carlo Pasero mentions the letter quoted above in Francia Spagna Impero a Brescia, 1509-1516 (Brescia, 1958), p. 56. Nocturnal comedies were one of the favourite festive activities at the court of Mantua, see D'Ancona, II, pp. 538 ff. For men's interest in women's dresses, see the long descriptions by Hieronimo Contarini to his father-in-law, Hieronimo Cornaro, in Le sontuosissime nozze di Hieronimo Martinengo.

6. See above the letter from Nicola Bargnani.

The only exceptions are the already mentioned diarists Bartolomeo Palazzo, who reports with a certain regularity on performances taking place in private houses, Pandolfo Nassino, Tommaso Mercanda and Giambattista Palazzo<sup>7</sup> on one or two occasions. But, the most surprising source of evidence is the chronicle of a notary, Ludovico Caravaggi.<sup>8</sup> Although Caravaggi is mentioned by Carlo Pasero in the Storia di Brescia as a source of information on entertainments, apparently the series of productions noted in his diary has so far escaped the notice of scholars. His information is interesting because it records the author and, in two cases, the titles of the play. Moreover Ludovico Caravaggi's diary covers a period which is not covered by the other chroniclers mentioned.

The official-sixteenth century documents of public administration which have been consulted are very reticent about records of comedies, or of any other kind of play.

The Archivio Antico Municipale of Brescia,<sup>9</sup> a collection of documents contains no hint of any public expenses the town may have incurred for the staging of public plays. The Provvisioni del Consiglio Cittadino<sup>10</sup> are equally lacking in

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7. Giambattista Palazzo, Diario 1548-1550 in Cronache bresciane inedite, I.

8. See ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis, n., 18. He is not recorded in the list of notaries in the 'Pergamene dei Notarili: sec. XIV-XVII n. 26,' compiled by Giuseppe Bonelli, L'Archivio di Stato in Brescia. Notizia e inventario (Pavia, 1924), p. 85. However he calls himself a notary in his own diary: 'Primieramente io Ludovico alle 2 Jenaro 1548 mi fece crear et far nottario', f. 80.

9. Brescia, Queriniana, Varietà 1484:9, MSS.

10. Brescia, Queriniana, Provvisioni, 1501-1562, CVII 518 - CVIII 546, MSS.

evidence, except for the mention of the comedy that was prohibited in 1530.<sup>11</sup> Neither the Atti dei Deputati Pubblici<sup>12</sup> nor the Polizze d'estimo<sup>13</sup> (1517-1713) offer further help. Nothing is indicated in the Indici Plutei delle Provvisioni which is 'un elenco di tutti i documenti, e libri esistenti in questo Archivio, nel 1790 circa, e molti dei quali, anche necessari e preziosi ora non si rinvencono'.<sup>14</sup>

Presumably modern and past researchers of the architecture and town planning of Brescia in the Renaissance had no better luck.<sup>15</sup>

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11. See ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis, n., 7.
  12. Brescia, Queriniana, Archivio Storico Civico, D.IX. 825-826, MSS. The documents date from 1549 even if the catalogue indicates 1544.
  13. Brescia, Queriniana, Polizze d'estimo dei cittadini domiciliati in Brescia, 1500-1600, E.VI.1040, MSS.
  14. Brescia, Queriniana, E.VI.1030, MSS.
  15. Luigi Fé D'Ostiani, Storia tradizione e arte nelle vie di Brescia (Brescia, 1971, 3rd edition). Andrea Valentini, Del palazzo di Broletto in Brescia (Brescia, 1902). Gaetano Panazza, 'Pitture e sculture nel Broletto di Brescia con particolare riguardo ai secoli XVI-XVII-XVIII e XIX' (hereafter 'Pitture e sculture nel Broletto'), Commentarii dell'Ateneo di Brescia per l'anno 1970, pp. 213-35. The only information about performances in the Broletto is in the 17th century for the arrival of Ferdinand II and is found in I diarii dei Bianchi 1603-1630, in Cronache bresciane inedite, IV (1937) p. 281. This performance is also mentioned by Agostino Zanelli, 'Storia bresciana. Il Granduca Ferdinando II a Brescia', La Provincia di Brescia, 3 October 1893, the page numbers are not printed.

Nobody records a place in the town specifically devoted to private or public performances.

Another potential contemporary source which proves disappointing is the previously mentioned sixteenth-century 'best-seller' by Agostino Gallo, Le venti giornate dell'agricoltura et de' piaceri della villa. Though written by the author of at least one Brescian comedy and despite the numerous performances of comedies in the Gonzaga villas in the Mantuan countryside, the work records no theatrical activity in the private houses in the Brescian territory, apart from a vague mention in a generic attack against women who are always present 'dove si balla, si fanno comedie, tragedie, giostre, bagordi e torneamenti'.<sup>16</sup>

The only overall picture of the theatre in Brescia found for this study, is by a non-Brescian sixteenth-century scholar, Gerolamo Ruscelli. In his collection of comedies, called Delle comedie elette nuovamente raccolte (1554), none of which has a Brescian author, he sketches a short history of the significance of comedy through the centuries, and inserts the name of Brescia close to the major Renaissance courts, mentioning it as one of the most active centres in relation to the theatre.

A questi nostri tempi quanto sieno in pregio appresso i Principi e ogni bello e lodato ingegno, non accade che si ponga in dubbio, veggendosi che in ogni festa solenne, e in ogni splendidissimo convito o nozze, e in ogni ricevimento di gran Principe par che nõ si sappia nè possa fare spettacolo più grato in universale à ciascuno, nè più honorato di questo delle Comedie. Onde l'illustrissima casa da Este, quella de' Medici, la Montefeltria, la Gonzaga, le più gloriose Republiche, Roma, le nobilissime e in

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16. Gallo, Le venti giornate, giornata XVIII, p. 346.



ogni parte pienamente honoratissime città di Napoli, di Bologna, di Brescia, e di Genova e quasi ogn'altra delle principali d'Italia sono in ogni tempo use di farne recitare con apparati così rari, che forse con molto più ragione poteano quei che vi eran presenti, chiamarsi non uditori ma spettatori. 17

Although Ruscelli does not support his claims either with details of specific performances or with names of titles or authors, it is difficult to dismiss his testimony as publicity for his own edition of sixteenth-century comedies. He was the author of many scholarly works, took part in many of the fashionable literary debates of the day and some of his previous work as an editor indicate that he was in contact with the literary world of Brescia.<sup>18</sup>

His mention of Brescia is particularly valuable not only because it is unique but also because it offers a picture of Brescia which coincides with that deducible from the other thin pieces of available evidence on the theatre.

At this point it is necessary to present details of the performances in sequence before making some observations on their dates and on the role played by the representatives of the Venetian government as patrons of the theatre in Brescia.

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17. (Venice, 1554), p. I (my italics).

18. Rime di diversi eccellenti autori bresciani, edited by Gerolamo Ruscelli (Venice, 1554), includes poems of the Brescian comedy writers Giovanni Andrea Ugoni (pp. 34-55, 74 and 80), of Vincenzo Gabiani (pp. 213-15); Del tempio alla Divina Signora Donna Giovanna D'Aragona, edited by Gerolamo Ruscelli (Venice, 1555), includes a poem by Domenico Veniero, the camarlingo who played an important part in protecting festivals in Brescia and to whom Vincenzo Gabiani dedicated his comedy I Gelosi (p. 17), a poem by Vincenzo Gabiani (p. 111) and one by Vincenzo Metello, the Brescian nobleman who recited the prologue of I Gelosi (p. 35). Ruscelli is also the editor of I fiori delle rime de' poeti illustri (Venice, 1558) which includes several poems by Giovanni Andrea Ugoni (pp. 377-90).

- 1504 Letter by Isabella Gonzaga to the Brescian Count Luigi Avogadro: 'Perchè havemo bisogno de li nostri gazzanti venuti li a Bresso a representar la comedia. Mantuae Ultimi Xbris 1504. 19
- 1508 Adì 11 [Octobre] fo recitado una Comedia in casa de meser Julio di Martinengo, et f una bella Comedia. 20

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19. A. Bertolotti, 'Varietà archivistiche e bibliografiche', Il Bibliofilo, 9, June-July, 1888, p. 85. D'Ancona quotes Bertolotti's article, but places the letter in 1503.
20. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 258. Giulio Martinengo may also have been the author of some plays: 'Anche il cav. Giulio Martinengo, molto probabilmente del ramo Colleoni, figlio di Gherardo, fu fatto regio senatore [by the French King when Brescia was under French rule 1509-1516]. Era ricco, estroso non illetterato (sembra anzi autore di una commedia) fino allora amicissimo del conte Nicolò Gambara col quale mantenne una copiosa corrispondenza epistolare [...]. Mantenne purestretti rapporti con la più chiusa nobiltà bresciana, lombarda e veneta (Giovanni Cornaro, ammalato alla vigilia della battaglia di Agnadello, venne ospitato in casa sua); fu inoltre tanto intimo dei marchesi di Mantova che Isabella d'Este, desiderosa nel gennaio del 1502 d'onorevolmente comparire alle nozze di suo fratello Alfonso con Lucrezia Borgia, non esitò a confidenzialmente richiederli in prestito [...] certe catene d'oro bellissime'. He died between the 29th March and the 3rd June 1514. All this precious information about the close relations of the Brescian casate with the more important neighbours, is given by Pasero in Francia Spagna Impero a Brescia, pp. 48-9. However, he does not indicate the source of his information about the mentioned comedy and I presume is in one of the unordered documents of the Carteggi Gambara in the Queriniana. This Giulio must not be mistaken for another Giulio Martinengo who was a famous local letterato and founded the Accademia degli Occulti in Brescia, see Paolo Guerrini, I conti di Martinengo (Brescia, 1930).

- 1511 [10 June] fo recitado una Comedia in casa de M. a Tadea da Gambarà. 21
- 1511 [10 June] domani ge sara una Comedia ala nocte. 22
- 1526 [11 February] the Captain of Brescia organized a 'Comedia et recitada el dì de Carnevale'. 23
- 1526 Adì 13 [February] ne fo recitada una altra nel ditto logo [il palazzo del Capitano] 24: de lo Eunuco. 25
- 1530 19 January, a request was presented for the representation of a comedy by the local youth, but their request was rejected by the Deputati Pubblici of the Consiglio Comunale. 26
- 1538 [24 February] "e ge fo fatto una comedia" during the festivities, dances and banquets for the wedding of Carlo Averoldo. 27
- 1545 Performance of the I Gelosi, a comedy by Vincenzo Gabiani, in the presence of 'questi tanti Magnifici Consiglieri, I Clarissimi Signori Rettori, e il Reverendissimo Vescovo.' 28
- 1546 7 March, in Broletto 29 L'Alessandro by Alessandro Piccolomini 30 was staged.
- 1546 8 March, in Broletto, Il Geloso by Ercole Bentivoglio was presented. 31

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21. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 271.
22. See this chapter, n., 5.
23. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 325.
24. In that year the Capitano was Francesco Foscari and the podestà was Nicolò Tiepolo, see Bonelli, L'Archivio di Stato in Brescia, p. 103.
25. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 325.
26. Provvisione, 19 January 1530. It is transcribed and discussed in the ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis.
27. Nassino, f. 253. About the official engagement of the wedding, there is the following sentence by Bartolomeo Palazzo: 'Adì 10 m.r. Carlo Averoldo fece una bellissima neza cum uno bellissimo aparato', p. 359; the editor suggests that neza means noviza, official engagement n., 4.
28. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo. The dedicatory letter is dated 5 May 1545.
29. It was the seat of the Rettori.
30. Caravaggi, f. 57.
31. Ibid., f. 57.

The dates of these performances show how the cartellone in Brescia was up to date with the national theatre, and provides new information on plays of well-known authors, such as Alessandro Piccolomini and Ercole Bentivoglio. In fact L'Alessandro had been performed in 1543-44 in Siena by the Accademici Intronati during Carneval.<sup>32</sup> Bentivoglio wrote his play in 1544 (according to the dedicatory epistle). The play was then published in Venice in 1545 and there is a record of a performance in Verona by the Accademia Filarmonica during Carnival in 1549.<sup>33</sup>

1548 In Alli 13 [February] si fu in Brescia una comedia in Broletto composta per ma Vinc.o gabiano di Brescia et la fece presentar el cav moro [a Brescian nobleman] et s.or Gio:Battista gavardo (villicet) su una morischa milla [uncertain word]. 34

1548 Adi 13 febraro venne Fedrigo da Venetia, era stato la do agosto in qua. El di medesimo se fece una comedia in Palazzo del Capitano. 35

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32. Florindo Cerreta, 'Introduzione' to Alessandro Piccolomini, L'Alessandro (Siena, 1966). This play is also discussed as a possible source of the Agnella by Turco, see ch. 'Agnella. A Narrative Structure', in this thesis.

33. Vittorio Cavazzocca Mazzanti, 'Un teatro veronese anteriore al Filarmonico', Atti dell'Accademia d'agricoltura, scienze e lettere di Verona, 1924, serie V, I, p. 78. For further details about other performances, see Alberto Dradi Maraldi, 'Introduzione' to Il Geloso by Ercole Bentivoglio (Turin, 1972).

34. Caravaggi, f. 8lv.

35. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 385; it is likely he refers to the same comedy mentioned by Caravaggi on the same day.

- 1550 Performance of the comedy Agnella by Carlo Turco:  
'Comedia nuova del S. Carlo Turco Asolano recitata in  
Asola 36 nella venuta de gli Ill.mi Signori il Duca di  
Nemurs, il Duca di Boglion e altri Illustriss. Sig.  
Francesi'. 37
- 1553 An unspecified comedy is played in the Palazzo del  
Provveditore in Asola. 38
- 1557 In alli 2 marzo fu recitata una comedia et la haveva  
composta il s.or nicholo secco in una sala del Clarissimo  
cap. o in Broletto et heri sera se ne voleva recitar [sic]  
Fu fatto un primo atto si feci danzo coi mori, che non  
si poti compirsi [...] poi la comedia fu bella et i  
gentilhuomini la fecero tra i quali li era i Cav.er gavarado. 39
- 1558 There is no evidence that the comedy Il Sergio by the  
Brescian Ludovico Fenarolo was performed in Brescia; the  
date is derived from internal evidence in the play 'Adesso  
che semo del 1558'. 40
- 1563 [9 February] 'Fu recitata in Palacio la mia Castruccia  
Comedia con honoratissima Audienza'in Salò. 41

These records confirm the strong interest in the theatre in  
Brescia described by Ruscelli and indicate two aspects of the  
theatre itself: the fact of its being up-to-date with the theatre  
production of other areas in Italy and the lack of comedy  
performances in a public building or place. It is a situation  
that suggests a form of hostility on the part of the municipal  
administration towards public plays, as though the theatre in Brescia

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36. Important Renaissance town in the south part of the plain of the  
Brescian territory. See also ch. 'Carlo Turco', in this thesis.

37. Turco, Agnella, frontispiece.

38. Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 14,  
fascicolo A/2, busta XV.

39. Caravaggi, f. 201.

40. Fenarolo, Il Sergio, II. 13. 5-6.

41. Grattarolo, p. 46.

was accepted only as a private form of entertainment, or as a personal pastime of some literary amateurs. It is a hypothesis which is confirmed by the content and form of the plays, as their analysis will show. Tournaments, too, were restricted to the aristocracy but at least they were organised in public places and used whole areas of a city as a theatre,<sup>42</sup> so that even large crowds could watch them, though not from the specially built seats for guests, called the tribunali.

Segalino in his report of the joust for Stefano Tiepolo, speaks of about 25,000 people, not only from all over the Brescian territory but also from other parts of Italy, so that the Mercato Novo, the town square where tournaments were held, had to be enlarged and an area covered in order to hold more seats:

Il gran vano, e apertura del quale è stato coperto di travi, d'altre diverse sorti di legnami fortissimi, accio piu agiatamente la folta moltitudine potesse starvi [...] la moltitudine delle persone, le quali furono stimate arrivare al numero di venti in venticinque milia, che molti erano saliti sopra i tetti, e altri come li stornelli si erano infrascati su quelli arbori. 43

The same large crowds could enjoy wedding processions and trionfi parading along the streets. The Rettore Hieronimo Cornaro, describing the wedding of Hieronimo Martinengo (1543) for which, he claimed, 'farebe mestiero di haver la facundia et eloquentia et stilo di Cicerone certamente chi a pieno volesse descriver li aparati, feste et triomphi fati',<sup>44</sup> also mentioned that he

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42. J.R. Hale, Renaissance Europe 1480-1520 (London, 1971), p. 258. One of the public areas in Brescia was 'quel Campo vicino alla porta, onde si esce per venire a Vinegia detto Mercato novo molto spacioso [...] e grande', see Le sontuosissime nozze di Hieronimo Martinengo, p. 2.

43. Segalino, pp. 2-3 (my it. lics).

44. Le sontuosissime nozze di Hieronimo Martinengo, p. 11.

would leave out a description of the

moltitudine del popolo che a veder era seduto su le  
mura de la cità, et de fuori su la fosa, et per quei  
campi. 45

Need for more space is recorded also by Pandolfo Nassino in his  
report of the famous wedding of Averoldo Capriolo in 1538, when  
a comedy was also given, as noted, in the private family palace:

fo fato uno salotto postizo nella corte di assi [...] fo  
che pareva no fosse findo [...] fo invidado Cremonesi,  
mantuani e dialtri principi. E li s.ri. Rectori e  
grandissimi gentilhomeni di Bressa et ou prestito di  
case di gentilhomini vicini per loggiare di ditti  
forestieri. 46

The scarcity of records describing plays may also be  
explained by the 'intimacy' and 'privacy' with which they were  
set up. The regular historians were possibly just not invited  
to these private entertainments, unless they happened to be  
noblemen. It is reliable to think that those who refer to  
productions of plays were part of the selected audience, either  
because they were noble (Nassino, the Palazzo brothers) or held  
important office (Caravaggi).<sup>47</sup> For instance, the Averoldo  
Capriolo wedding already mentioned is described by two people.  
Nassino, who was either a guest himself or had his father there,  
described the inner parts of the ceremony, with the banquet and

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45. Ibid., p. 15. Descriptions of large crowds watching  
wedding processions or visits by important people can be  
found in Mercanda, p. 147. Odorici, Storie bresciane,  
VIII, p. 329. Nassino, f. 253.

46. Nassino, ff. 253r.-v.

47. Nassino describes himself as 'nobile di Brescia' in the  
front page of his work; for the Palazzos, see Guerrini,  
Cronache bresciane inedite, I, pp. v-xii; for Caravaggi,  
see his chronicle, f. 57

the comedy,<sup>48</sup> but Tommaso Mercanda, who was not a member of the aristocracy,<sup>49</sup> limited his description to the external procession.

Alli 24 february 1538 in dominica lo conte Laurentio filiolo dil Conte Giovan paulo Capreolo nobel bressano tradusse a marito la Magnifica Madona Nostra, [...] condotta a cavallo et accompagnata a cavallo da molti gentilhomini cossì bressani come forestieri. 50

The chronicles of this town never report those comical incidents which are recorded from other Renaissance towns where the public was admitted to share the piaceri of the nobility; joining in and perhaps instigating the gaiety provided by chastising bad actors, or bad authors, with the 'coperte co' manichi', as happened at the court of Ferrara where Alfonso d'Este himself during the performance of a comedy, 'fece balzare' some of the spectators, including some women who had been noisy and thus provided entertainment for Lucrezia Borgia and for the popolani.<sup>51</sup>

But opportunity to watch the plays put on by the court did not mean 'democracy' because in Ferrara too, comedies,

facevano parte di quelli spettacoli organizzati dalla corte per ostentare la sua magnificenza e stordire con la grandiosità [...]. Il popolo pubblico [...] era già preparato alle esperienze teatrali, come era preparato ad accettare qualunque cosa imposta dalla Corte [...] disposto, soprattutto, ad essere contento di partecipare alla festa cortigiana; 52

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48. Nassino, f. 253.

49. Guerrini, 'Introduzione' to Cronache bresciane inedite, I, pp. vii-xi.

50. Mercanda, p. 155.

51. Alessandro Del Vita, Vita gaudente e bizzarra nella Rinascenza (Arezzo, 1961), p. 60. A similar episode happened in Rome where at the Corte Papale 'si fece balzare' a friar, as is reported by an estense, Paolucci Alfonso, see Del Vita, p. 60; see also Antonio Piromalli, La cultura a Ferrara al tempo di Ludovico Ariosto (Florence, 1953), p. 121, who calls it 'coltre de balzar'.

52. Piromalli, p. 120. Apollonio, II, pp. 6 ff.



yet, in other towns the lower classes had access to the theatre. According to Cruciani, performances in Rome were attended by a large and enthusiastic crowd:

Il pubblico affluì numeroso: la cavea era piena e così le gradinate, la scena era tanto ingombra di gentiluomini che, durante le rappresentazioni, poco spazio restava per i recitatori. L'ingresso non era chiuso, però dei sorveglianti lasciavano entrare solo chi all'aspetto ne sembrava degno; gli altri si arrampicavano per le congiunture della costruzione e guardavano attraverso le fessure. 53

Popular enthusiasm was similarly high in Mantua and in Ferrara, where sometimes the spectators seem to have been as vociferous as the Elisabethan populace, and above all keen not to miss the opportunity they were offered by the Court, as is colourfully reported by a contemporary,

el popullo tanto stretto che appena si puoteva uno mettersi la mano al naso se già le braccia non teneva sopra le spalle del suo vicino. 54

Totaly different is the case of the theatre in Venice.

Authorities there, adopted a well defined policy towards the theatre in order not to kill the traditional drive and gusto for outdoor and indoor festivals and the newly aroused interest in the New Comedy. Special legal arrangements were issued which compelled

les nobles à représenter publiquement les momarie pour que tous les habitants, sans exception, puissent y assister et avoir conscience de participer à la vie théâtrale et officielle de la citée. 55

The Brescian picture, in turn, is completely different.

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53. Cruciani, p. lxvi.

54. Letter by Jano Pencaro to Isabella Gonzaga (II February 1499) printed in Piromalli, p. 122; see also, the letters by Isabella Gonzaga describing the wedding of Alfonso with Lucrezia Borgia in Apollonio, II, pp. 15-16.

55. Maria Teresa Muraro, 'Le lieu des spectacles (publics ou privés) à Venise au XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles', in Le lieu théâtral à la Renaissance (pp. 85-93), p. 87.

Here the strictest form of privacy is opposed to the popular participation in other towns. There are no Brescian records to suggest the presence of a crowd among the spectators. Indeed, in the Prologo of I Gelosi, Gabiani defends his comedy by explicitly describing it as a performance written for a select public only and not for 'brigade', that is the populace.<sup>56</sup>

This absence of the common people is also explained by the fact that comedies in Brescia were only performed within the walls of private houses, or, after 1526, only within the walls of the Broletto, the private lodge of the Rettori. Also they were always associated with the names of the most famous noble casate of the town, the Gambara, the Martinengo, the Averoldo, the Avogadro and the Capriolo. Performances were held in the halls of their palazzi to mark the ricorrenze of some private events in their families. Comedies, particularly at the beginning and during the first part of the century, were offered to one's guests after a sumptuous banquet, choreographed dances and music as the final and perhaps most refined entertainment, in the presence of ladies competing with each other in the elegance of their dress and luxury of their jewelry:

haveva pifferi mantuani [...] cu uno tribunale  
grande dove stavano le donne et Rectori [...]   
portavano pernici [...] doy vini [...] porcellini  
[...] e ge fo fatto una comedia . 57

Even later in the century when comedies seem to have taken place almost exclusively in the Palazzo del Capitano, there is never any

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56. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo. The word is used in this sense also by Segalino, p. 2.

57. Nassino, f. 235v.

suggestion of the presence of the popolo at the performances. Moreover, all these mansions, large and luxurious as they were, could never provide the space of a court palace.<sup>58</sup>

What impresses in the records is not only the absence of a crowd but also the absence of professional actors. The only evidence of them in Brescia in the Renaissance is the letter of Isabella Gonzaga, where presumably 'gazzani' means 'garzoni'. Because of the scarcity of documents it is absurd to make any categorical statement, yet it is puzzling that the word 'histriones' or other similar terms have not been found. Very occasionally though, on wedding occasions, 'pifferi' and 'buffoni' are mentioned, and, in one case, even an acrobat.<sup>59</sup>

By contrast, the local noblemen appear often as players as well as impresarios. In 1526 Bartolomeo Palazzo reports a dispute among noblemen who were preparing a play that led to the comedy being postponed for a few days:

Adì 7 febraro el Capitano di Bressa fece fare una bellissima festa et poi la se doveva recitare una Commedia, ma Mr Marcantonio di Martinengo dete doi bofete a Mr Gioan maria Avogaro, et el Capitano el cazò lui zoso dela festa e per questo la Commedia non se recitò. 60

In 1530 the request for permission to prepare a play came from young local people<sup>61</sup> and no participation of actors from outside appears in the Provvisione rejecting the application. Caravaggi himself proudly notes in his diary that he had a part in Il Geloso by Ercole Bentivoglio,

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58. Fausto Lechi, Le dimore bresciane in cinque secoli di storia. Il Cinquecento nella città (Brescia, 1974).

59. Caravaggi mentions a 'turco' walking over a suspended rope, f. 183.

60. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 325.

61. Provvisione, 19 February 1530. See the text in the ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis.

la qual fu molto ben recitata et ancor mi Lodovico  
dissi una parte. 62

And in his descriptions of the performances of the two comedies of Nicolò Secco and Vincenzo Gabiani, recur these expressions 'la comedia fu bella et i gentilhuomini la fecero [...] tra i quali li era i Cav. er gavarò';<sup>63</sup> and 'la fece presentar el cav. moro et s.or Gio: Battista gavarò'.<sup>64</sup> The recurrence of the same name may be an indication that the plays were left to a personal initiative, which played in Brescia, on a minor scale, the same promoting role as that of the Gonzaga and the Estensi in Mantua and Ferrara. It was under the initiative of two noblemen, the count Gian Paolo Capriolo and Monsignor Hippolito<sup>65</sup>, that two comedies were organized in the space of one year. In Brescia the Renaissance theatre was dependent on the interest of single mecenati even more so than in the principal courts, where too, it was bound to decline and prosper according to deaths and coronations;<sup>66</sup> thus it was even more than elsewhere dissociated from the interests and tastes of any kind of public audience.

Some remarks must also be made concerning dates. There are no traces of fifteenth-century performances<sup>67</sup> except for an ambiguous sentence in Corradino Palazzo's Diario, where he talks

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62. Caravaggi, f. 57.

63. Ibid., f. 221.

64. Ibid., f. 81.

65. Ibid., f. 57.

66. For instance, for the temporary decline of the theatre in Mantua in the 1550s, during the minority of Prince Guglielmo, see D'Ancona, II, p. 442.

67. For this century I have only read printed sources of the usually quoted chroniclers.

of a 'novella' being 'in frequentia' on the 15th January 1465:

El dì de San Giohanne recomenzò la novella del  
Salvalaio. 68

As for the beginning of the sixteenth century, the first known document proves that the court fashion of staging plays had appeared in Brescia by the very beginning of the Cinquecento.

Records are too scarce to draw any conclusions, but it is worthwhile comparing the state of the theatre in the three neighbouring capitals to see if they had any influence on Brescia at this time.

In Mantua, the Gonzaga court had been enjoying Latin productions and had encouraged and acted as patron to the theatre for more than a century, under the close reciprocal influence of Ferrara. Evidence also shows that these activities were not only confined to the city itself but also spread to the various country residences of the Gonzaga, bringing them even closer to Brescia. Apart from the specific exchange of jewellery and actors for performances of comedies, in the early part of the century, further personal contacts were certainly continued throughout the century, as an expert of their archives states:

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68. Corradino Palazzo, Diario in Cronache bresciane inedite, I, p. 231. The word 'novella' to indicate a comedy is used also by the Brescian Nicolò Secco in his play Gl'Inganni, 1548? per Filippo Giunti (Florence, 1615). As for the name, Selvaggio is a common name among accademici: he might have been one of the members of the academy Vertumni which flourished in Brescia in the fifteenth century, or he may have been 'Salvalay' one of the characters of a series of sonnets in Brescian dialect in dialogue form; for these sonnets see Storia di Brescia, IV (1964), p. 755.

All'aprirsi del Cinquecento viene bruscamente, non si sa perchè, interrotto il carteggio bresciano: chi volesse seguir la storia dell'eroica città negli anni procellosi della Lega di Cambray[sic] o informarsi de' rapporti sempre cordiali de' Gonzaga con le maggiori famiglie bresciane, deve sfogliare i dossiers veneziani; 69

and as Caravaggi proves, in 1549, reports about comedies constantly arrived in Brescia.<sup>70</sup>

The same resurgence of the theatre is supported in Milan at this time, which can even be proud of having had the help of Leonardo Da Vinci for one of the dramatic entertainments.<sup>71</sup>

Although no precise reference to a collaboration similar to that with Mantua can be found, it is worthwhile noting the reference to Milan in these notes, quoted previously, on a comedy performed on the 2nd of June 1511.

Adì 2 zugno (1511) Fedrigo mio fratello andò cum m. Bartholomeo de Martinengo a Milano a torre la sposa del conte Fedrigo da Gambara [...]. Adì 8 venne la sposa del conte Fedrigo da Gambara da Milano cum una bellissima compagnia. Adì 10 vene el Contin baron in questa terra cum el general de Normandia cum li soi de casa, et quel di fo recitada una comedia in casa de M.a. Tadea da Gambara. 72

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69. Luzio, II, p. 240. There might be further documents in the mass of manuscripts kept in Mantua, the State Archives, Indice delle schede Davari, comici e commedie 1408-1784, N.14 or Venezia-Brescia, N. 26-27.

70. Caravaggi, f. 100: 'Alli 22 ottobre il duca francesco Gonzaga di Mantova si manete moglie la figliola di Ferdinante così si fece giostre bagordi e comedie et altri cosi'; Caravaggi's reliability is proved in D'Ancona, II, p. 401.

71. Manzella and Pozzi, pp. 19-20.

72. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 271. See also Giuseppe Bonelli, L'Archivio Martinengo di Villagana. Notizia e inventario (Brescia, 1951); 'Carteggi (sec. XVI-XVIII): Lettere dei Governatori di Milano e case patrizie per ricorrenze liete o tristi', p. 59, n., 131; they include letters of Isabella, Federico and Laura Gonzaga, but this archive is still private property and not available to the public. Information of a play in Milan is given by Caravaggi, f. 69.

Contacts through marriages with members of the Milanese society continued until well late into the century, as well as with people from other towns of the south Po valley and this created some concern for the Rettori.<sup>73</sup>

But the best envoy of the fashionable trends of the theatre was most likely the eclectic Brescian figure Nicolò Secco, who will be considered together with the other Brescian dramatists. Author of four comedies, he held many important diplomatic posts in the State of Milan, where he was made Capitano di Giustizia. His activity as dramatist reached its zenith when he wrote and also directed the play Gl' Inganni for the entrance of Philip II to Milan in 1548. He never lost contact with Brescia, even before retiring to his native Montichiari, in the province of Brescia. In fact he made regular visits to Brescia, and is recorded as having passed through in February 1549 by Giambattista Palazzo:

Adì 14 vene in Bressa m.r. Nicolò Seccho dottore [...].  
Adì 18 m.r. Nicolò Seccho se partì da Bressa per far  
il suo viaggio cioe andar dal gran Turcho per imbasador  
del Imperator. 74

Previously Caravaggi had remarked in his chronicle:

Nicoli Seccho dott. bressano si fu fatto dalla Cesarea  
Maesta senator di Milano et maestro di Justitia. 75

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73. See a relazione sent by Francesco Tagliapietra in 1567 in Relazioni di Rettori, p. 105. Contacts were strong with Bologna. Veronica Gambara, the most famous representative of the family was living there. In 1530 a Brescian nobleman, Brunoro Gambara, was appointed to arrange the entertainment of guests arriving for the celebration of the coronation of Charles V.

74. Giambattista Palazzo, pp. 390-1.

75. Caravaggi, f. 59.

In 1557 one of his plays was performed in Brescia<sup>76</sup> and it is therefore an interesting coincidence that, when Secco's comedy Gl' Innamati was produced by him in Milan for the arrival of Philip II, the other play put on for the celebration was L'Alessandro by Piccolomini:<sup>77</sup> the same play that had been staged the previous year (1546) in Brescia by Gioan Battista Capriolo and read by Caravaggi himself.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to Mantua and Milan, the 'nova comedia' was not introduced in Venice until later. Only in the first decade of the sixteenth century did it become one of the favourite pastimes, as is known from a decree issued by the Venetian authorities on the 29th of December 1508, which declared that these spettacoli 'a paucissimo tempore citra, appareat introductum in hac civitate!<sup>79</sup>

As records indicate that the New Comedy enjoyed the favour of the Brescian nobility from the very beginning of the century, it is possible to suggest tentatively that comedies were introduced to Brescia under the influence of Mantua and perhaps Milan, and that only later, after the return of the Venetians to Brescia, did a more solid theatrical influence become established. In fact, in Venice, the neo-classic comedy was in its infancy when the battle of Agnadello (1509) occurred, and the Venetians had to abandon Brescia to the French who were in the Duchy of

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76. Ibid., f. 57.

77. Saxl reports the letter of the Ambassadors of Siena, 26 December 1548, pp. 47-8. On the frontispiece of all the editions of the play there is the date 1547. Because of several discrepancies about the date of the performance further research is necessary to establish it, see ch. 'Literary Records of Comedies' of this thesis.

78. Caravaggi, f. 57.

79. Venice, the State Archives, Consiglio dei Dieci, Misti, R. 32, 29 December 1508, f. 55. See also, D'Ancona, II, pp. 113-14.



Milan. The French domination did not hamper the performance of comedies. On the contrary, they seem to have enjoyed a certain impetus, perhaps benefiting from the closer links with the Lombard city, and the introduction of new exotic forms of life.<sup>80</sup>

A more specific shift from the influence of Mantua to that of Venice can be detected after the Serenissima returned to Brescia (1516).

Whether as part of a general policy devised to control the cultural activities of the town, as a velvet glove on an iron hand, or because of the personal interest of some of the Rettori in the theatre, the return of Venice coincided with a direct involvement of its authorities in the performance of most plays, and with a change of 'theatre'.

The first performances after the recapture of the town by Venice, were organized for Carneval in 1526. The actors were the same noblemen who in previous years had staged comedies in their own houses; but this time the sponsorship came directly from the Capitano<sup>81</sup> and another comedy was played in his palace soon afterwards.<sup>82</sup> From this date onwards all comedies we know of in Brescia, were played in the official residence of the Rettori, the Broletto, with the exception of the one played in the private palace of the Averoldo, for a wedding in 1538.

By the middle of the century there is therefore a change of patrons. Now this role was no longer played by the local nobles

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80. Pasero, Francia Spagna Impero a Brescia, pp. 54 ff.

81. Bartolomeo Palazzo, p. 325.

82. Ibid., p. 325.

alone but in conjunction with Venetian patricians. This combined with a change of lieu théâtral .

The choice of the Palazzo del Capitano or Broletto may have been determined by several concomitant causes.

It may not have been a choice at all, but may have been imposed by the Venetian government because of its basic mistrust of the Brescian nobles, and because it wanted to be well informed on the activities of a town which had already been affected by 'heresy', and was closely linked geographically and spiritually with the Council of Trent.<sup>83</sup> This is a hypothesis which will be discussed later with regard to censorship, while now it will be seen as the result of two logistic problems related to a change of the concept of comedy around the 1530's, and to a strong migratory movement from the town towards the villas of the countryside which affected Brescia around the middle of the century.

This interest in the villa during the Renaissance was not confined to Brescia, but Ventura points out one social factor which propagated it around those years. The yoke of the Serenissima was particularly intolerable for the old Brescian feudatari, who continually felt the need to affirm their high status compared to the lower nobility by means of a different style of life so that noble feudal lords such as the Gambara

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83. See ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' in this thesis.

and the Martinengo strived to appear 'più signori che gentiluomini',<sup>84</sup>  
The difficulty of cohabitation in the main town was solved by  
abandoning it, 'costoro non tenendo ne anco casa a Brescia,'<sup>85</sup>  
according to the anxious report of a Rettore, and, in fact, the  
names now mentioned in connection with comedies, are no longer those  
of the traditional high class families such as Martinengo and  
Averoldi, as in the first part of the century, but are names like  
Caravaggi and Moro, who were distinguished citizens, but of inferior  
rank.

The reasons for this tendency to leave the town and retire  
to a countryside residence given in Agostino Gallo's contemporary  
book on the pleasures of the villa, are more psychological and  
offer further evidence on the importance of this social phenomenon.  
According to Gallo, life in town had become impossible because of  
the bonds of etiquette and other constraints:

Non è ancora gran libertà, e commodità lo stare  
in Villa, che quando vogliamo andar' [sic] in qualche  
luogo, montando a cavallo per tèpo, haveremo fatto  
(alle volte) le quindici, e vinti miglia innanzi che  
niuno possa uscir di Brescia? Oltra che possiamo  
tardar di sera quato ci piace, che p(er) questo no ci  
vengono serrate le porte, come di còtinuo vien fatto  
alla nostra Città, passate che sian poco più di vintidue  
hore [...] Nella Città ci convien' andar ben vestiti, con  
servitori, e pieni di mille rispetti; sbrerrettando [sic]  
questo, e quello [...] Onde qui [in villa] ci è lecito andare  
e stare senza servitori, senza cappa, e senza saio. 86

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84. Carlo Pasero, Francia Spaña Impero a Brescia, p. 113; see also  
Ventura, p. 338.

85. See the relazione by Domenico Priuli in Relazioni di Rettori,  
pp. 130-1.

86. Gallo, Le venti giornate, p. 346.

All this impoverished the social town life of those very families who a few years earlier had animated it with their private plays, and also deprived the minor nobility of enjoying the large halls of the most luxurious palaces.

The withdrawal from private houses to the Broletto can also be interpreted as a sign of the need for a theatre site. This coincidence was probably related to the change of attitude towards comedy which took place all over Italy around the middle of the century.

Comedy, since its introduction in the Humanistic and Renaissance courts of Italy, was associated with festivities and celebrations. It was intermingled with other entertainments. Played in private houses, it did not have *a separate identity*. It was considered, at the utmost, prima inter pares, among other apparati. As records show, it was considered one act of a longer play. Usually the occasion was a wedding, which went on for several days. The frequency of this association seems to suggest the reaffirmation of comedy's original significance as a fertility rite<sup>87</sup>; a significance which in Renaissance weddings may have had the specific aim of an augurio to the bride.

But, when towards the middle of the century comedy started to find an identity of its own and to be considered a separate and independent form of drama, there came the need for a lieu théâtral different from the customary dining-halls.<sup>88</sup> Specific

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87. Comedy is believed to have derived from festival processions ending in a phallic song, Komos or comessatio.

88. André Chastel, 'Cortile et théâtre' in Le lieu théâtral à la Renaissance (pp.41-7), p. 41.

dimensional requirements were laid down for those halls which were to be used to stage plays,<sup>89</sup> *with the result that there were many attempts to plan* the ideal theatre *by* the middle of the century. It is therefore possible that the choice of the Broletto may be interpreted in this context, and that its rooms were chosen because they answered specific theatrical requirements.<sup>90</sup> In fact the sale in the Brescian private palaces were probably rather too small, and the largest palaces were only built after 1530,<sup>91</sup> when comedies had already been performed in Broletto for some time. The palazzo Averoldo was built in 1544, so that in 1538, Carlo Averoldo had had to borrow a few houses nearby to accommodate and entertain his guests at the famous marriage of his daughter, when a comedy was also staged.<sup>92</sup>

Unfortunately there are not many descriptions of these palaces and their halls as they were at that time. The main apartment was on the ground floor, generally facing the cortile which was an important part of the architecture of the palace; yet these cortili are never mentioned as places for comedies, in contrast with those at Venice, where very often throughout the century they had the specific function of being temporary theatres.<sup>93</sup> As in Venice, so in Brescia, beautiful paintings

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89. Andrea Palladio, The Four Books of Architecture, with a new introduction by A.K. Placzek, first published by Isaac Ware in 1738 (London, 1965), book I, ch. XXVII, p. 27.

90. For a description of the staging in private halls in Venice, see Muraro, pp. 86-9.

91. Livia Vannini, Brescia nella storia e nell'arte (Brescia, 1971), p. 227-52.

92. See above, n., 27.

93. Muraro, pp. 86-9.

covered the walls of the main halls and these probably served as general 'backcloths' for the performance of comedies, though probably when the first comedies were played, the wall decorations were more modest than later in the century. Palazzo Galini, for instance, at the beginning of the century when at least one comedy was staged, only had

al piano terra, qualche arco acuto ed una grande sala a travature e tavolette dipinte. 94

The beautiful wall-wide paintings commissioned from famous painters date more from the middle of the century. They were generally mythological episodes or allegorical scenes, and most of them date from the second half of the century.<sup>95</sup>

However, a close comparison with the rooms in the Broletto to establish, for instance, whether the shape of the stage was the same as that favoured by the Venetian architects, is impossible,<sup>96</sup> because this palace, too, underwent several modifications throughout the centuries. This is a difficulty which is also aggravated by the fact that it has not been possible to establish in which room of the palace comedies were played.<sup>97</sup>

It is only possible to suggest with some confidence that a particular place in the palace was in fact allocated for comedy

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94. Vannini, p. 231. For the use of panels in comedy productions, see Licisco Magagnato, Teatri italiani del Cinquecento (Venice, 1954), pp. 24-7.

95. Vannini, p. 228.

96. For a description of the stages in Venetian luoghi teatrali, see Muraro, p. 87; for other kind of stages see above, Magagnato's work.

97. The wing of the Capitano 'rimase pressochè intatta nelle sue forme romaniche fino alla fine del '500 o all'inizio del '600, quando subì profonde trasformazioni. Era divisa in due saloni, coperti con tetto a vista a capriate', Panazza, 'Pitture e sculture nel Broletto', p. 220.

performances, since in the Indice delle ducali esistenti nei registri pubblici della Cancelleria Prefettizia Inferiore, which was compiled in Brescia in 1738, there is listed a ducale concerning,

costruzione di stanze per servitù sua nel luogo ove si facevano le commedie. 1635. 4 febb. 25-90t. 98

Unfortunately the ducale has been lost,<sup>99</sup> and with it presumably more detailed information. A comparison between a plan of the palace before 1635 and a plan after that date is of no use here because the famous plan by Da Lezze (1609), on which all studies of the Broletto are based, does not reproduce the ground floor, and on the first floor there is no indication of rooms for servants.<sup>100</sup>

As a conclusion to the hypotheses suggesting the adoption of the Broletto as the only theatrical venue in Brescia, it is also worth paying attention to the fact that the Palazzo del Broletto was not the only large Renaissance public building in Brescia. More magnificent, and even more suitable for the prestige of the town, was the Palazzo della Città, called Palazzo della Loggia. It was the residence of the Municipal

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98. Brescia, the State Archives, \*G.V.14 or vol. 43, MSS.

99. No copy exists in the State Archives of Brescia, nor in Venice, the State Archives, Senato Terra, Registri, N.113 (1635), N.112 (september-february 1634), Senato Rettori, Registri, N.6 (1536).

100. The map of the building before 1635 is in Il catastico bresciano di Giovanni da Lezze (1609-1610) with a preface by Carlo Pasero (2 vols, Brescia, 1969), I, pp. 183 ff. No trace of it has been found in Brescia, Queriniana, Archivio Storico Civico, Memorie sul palazzo Broletto, 1442, MSS, nor in Archivio Storico Civico, Ristauri al Palazzo Broletto 1560-1788, A. VI, 150-159, MSS, nor in any other printed work on this building mentioned before and in the ch. 'Lack of a Public Theatre' in this thesis. Only Panazza in 'Pitture e sculture nel Broletto' calls the courtyard 'cortile dei comici' (p. 221), but he personally said that he referred to the late 17th and 18th century.

authorities and its halls had been decorated by Titian: some of the paintings represented,

le fucine di Vulcano, e alludeva [no] alle miniere di ferro, di cui abbondano i nostri Monti, e alla perizia de' Bresciani nel fabricar armi d'ogni sorta.<sup>101</sup>

Yet the Loggia is never mentioned as a place for staging plays, although Palladio himself saw it as a very functional space for social gatherings, and a useful place for promenading, dining and other recreations.<sup>102</sup> In Venice among these recreations were included performances of comedies.<sup>103</sup>

In the history of the evolution of comedy in the Renaissance, some consideration should also be given to the cost of staging and to the provenance of the financial support for it, because, even after comedies became an independent form of recreation, separated from the traditional wedding celebrations, spectacular and luxurious intermezzi were still an essential part of any play. And also, as the records in Brescia testify, comedies were performed with intervals of 'danze coi mori',<sup>104</sup> and 'a moresca mella',<sup>105</sup>.

Therefore, because of the high costs of apparati and stage scenery, one wonders whether the Broletto might have been chosen as a solution to financial problems.

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101. Giovan Battista Carboni, Notizie istoriche delli pittori, scultori, et architetti bresciani (Brescia, 1962), p. 15.

102. Palladio, Book 1, ch. XXI, p. 27.

103. Alvise Cornaro organized comedies in the loggia of his Venetian palace, see Magagnato, p. 33.

104. Caravaggi, f. 201.

105. Ibid., f. 81v.



In fact, in spite of the wealth of some Brescian families and of the pomp displayed during their private celebrations, the cost of their luxurious standard of living ate into their patrimonies.<sup>106</sup> Carlo Pasero recalls evidence of gossip taking place among the guests during the famous Averoldo-Capriolo wedding of 1538, because, in order to meet the expenses for the entertainments, which included one comedy performance, Carlo Averoldo had to sell 122 'pio' of land in Faverzano, so that, during the banquet preceding the comedy,

se diceva a tavola che tutti questi così sentivano  
di terra volendo dir che faceva questa spesa cu li  
dinari dela possession venduta. 107

Examples of difficulties in raising money for theatre plays can also be found in other towns. In Verona, the Accademia Filarmonica, often cited in connection with comedies, after a production of Il Geloso by Bentivoglio in 1549, had to sell all the material used for the staging:

Poi per poter pagare le varie spese, oltre ad essere  
ricorsa alla borsa degli accademici o compagni come  
fra loro si dicevano, vendette tutto il materiale  
adoperato, legname, scene, vestiari, addobbi. 108

Anton Francesco Grazzini, called Il Lasca, states that the intermezzi prepared for La Gelosia had to be cancelled because of lack of time and money.<sup>109</sup> In Milan, for the comedies

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106. Pasero finds in the authorities 'un' evidente preoccupazione per i dissesti patrimoniali provocati dalla emulazione delle famiglie', see Storia di Brescia, II, p. 371.

107. Nassino, ff. 484-6; he is also mentioned in Storia di Brescia, II, p. 371 n., 3.

108. Cavazzocca Mazzanti, p. 78.

109. Anton Francesco Grazzini, La Gelosia, 'Nota al Madrigale Primo' (1551), in Anton Francesco Grazzini, Teatro, edited by Giovanni Grazzini (Bari, 1953), p. 15.

organized for the arrival of Philip II, which represented one of the major events in the Renaissance (one of which, as mentioned before, was by the Brescian Nicolò Secco), there were difficulties on the part of the organizers in 'extracting' the necessary funds from the Cancelliere Ferrando Gonzaga, even if Nicolò Secco, the organizer, was no less than the Capitano di Giustizia in Milan. After some correspondence between the Count Francesco della Somaglia and the Cancelliere in which permission was begged to pull down a wall in the Senate Palace to make room for the scenery,<sup>110</sup> and money asked for to pay the actors from Florence, the Cancelliere finally replied, rejecting the requests:

In Aste 1548. al Conte Francesco della Somaglia.

quanto ad alloggiar la sala del senato con butar in Terra la intramezadura per farla più capace [...] mente mia esser che se accomodi nel modo che è, et che qũto al far venir le persone da Fiorenza [...] no mi par di far quella spesa. 111

But even more interesting is the information about funds given in another letter. Eight hundred scudi were allocated for the comedy, but, because they do not seem sufficient for the

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110. 'Sono stato insieme col s. Capitano [Nicolò Secco] et Ms. Domenico et allungo divisato li intermedi di della comedia se cosi se faranno sono grandi et stupendi, et non piu visti in comedia hanno ditto che la sala del senato sara piccola a tanto numero di gente, et alla comedia, et se divisato di voler buttar la muraglia per terra, et ruinar il Camarano del senato per unir detto camarano con la sala et tutto per allungar la sala': letter from the Count Francesco della Somaglia to Ferrante Gonzaga from Milan, August 30, 1548, Milan, the State Archives, Potenze Straniere, cartella 4, The folios are not numbered. For a description of the performance, see the summary of the report of the Sienese ambassador in Milan, 31 december 1548, by Saxl, p. 47.

111. Milan, the State Archives, Potenze Straniere, cartella 4, the sheet is not numbered. The documents are paraphrased by Saxl, pp. 41 ff., but the location given is no longer correct.

intermedi, the Cancelliere is urged to find extra funds. He is pressed to,

far exborsar una parte delli danari sopra li ottocento  
scuti per la comedia et cosi che faccia che questa  
Città quanto più presto trova modo del denaro. 112

Although, apparently, no comprehensive study has dealt with the financial problems of the theatres in the Renaissance,<sup>113</sup> it is quite likely that performances in private houses were financed by private means. In the court, as in Mantua, for instance, the patron was probably also the financial supporter. When such performances were organized as part of official and politically important festivities, as in Milan, it looks as if the money came from the city administration. In the letter mentioned above, it sounds as if the expenses were covered by means of gabelle.<sup>114</sup>

The position of Brescia is rather different, because the Broletto belonged to the Comune, but,

venuto il governo di S. Marco (1426) dietro  
rimostranze del comune riconobbe la proprietà  
comunale sul Broletto, ma riservavasi il possesso  
della parte settentrionale di esso, come ne erano  
stati in possesso gli antecedenti reggitori. La  
città prestava al Governo anche la sua parte,  
onde alloggiare i Podestà e i Capitani, con tutte  
le altre cariche amministrative e giudiziarie. 115

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112. Milan, the State Archives, Potenze Straniere, cartella 5, the sheet is not numbered.

113. For some details on the cost see D'Ancona, II, p. 442.

114. For another case whether the town provided the money to cover the costs of staging plays, see Cruciani, p.lvii: 'Il Comune di Roma [...] aveva deciso di dare la maggior risonanza possibile alle cerimonie per il conferimento della cittadinanza a Giuliano e Lorenzo de' Medici e aveva stabilito un programma di massima per le solennità e i festeggiamenti. E, tra i primi provvedimenti degli otto gentiluomini [...], fu la decisione di "fabricar un loco publico di capacita et ornato magnifico e bello, el quale rappresentasse forma di Theatro" '.

115. Fe' D'Ostiani, p. 321.

Moreover, there are no traces of comedies being played on official occasions, so that if such cases occurred, the expenses were probably taken from municipal funds, as the permission was to be granted by the Consiglio Cittadino to the Deputati Pubblici, who were the town representatives in charge of public celebrations. But who paid for the comedies in Broletto, which were sometimes set up by private citizens in a house allocated and partly belonging to the Venetian authorities?

Because of the strict rules of the sumptuary laws, it is unlikely that public money was made available for these 'private' occasions, particularly as laws against festivities were not restricted to outdoor events, but also covered those indoors. For the death of an important member of the local nobility, mourning would be proclaimed and private entertainments prohibited. For instance, in 1546 when Giorgio Martinengo died,

si prohibiter di ballare di fuori e di dentro cū pena  
grada di giorno e di notte, et etia il mascherarsi;  
fu molto brutto et niente di piaceri il Carnivali. 116

What is not known concerning Brescia is whether the hospitality given by the Rettori implied also the payment of the theatrical expenses by the Venetian authorities,<sup>117</sup> or whether, even if staged in the Broletto, the money had to be provided out of private funds.

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116. Caravaggi, f. 57. No surname is given by the source for this 'Giorgio'. Bartolomeo Palazzo records the death of Giorgio Martinengo, but in the October of the same year, p. 380.

117. 'In Broletto nella sala ultima dell'armi fatta in capo alla loggia Lezza, si recita la tragedia intitolata l'Antiloco in un bellissimo teatro con bellissime scene dove un puttino dell'Illustrissimo Podestà fa il Prologo. Vi è gran concorso di Nobiltà spettatrice. Tutto a spese del Podestà; 12 March 1628 (my italics), I diari dei Bianchi 1603-1630, p. 281.

The first possibility would be very complimentary for Venice, and would cast an interesting light on the Venetian contribution to the theatre in the Renaissance. It would indicate that the Rettori were not only protectors but were in fact real mecenati; that the mid-sixteenth-century theatre owes as much to them as it does to the D'Este sisters for the role they played at the courts of Ferrara, Mantua, and Milan at the beginning of the century.

However, at the same time this implied a tighter form of control. The lack of a public theatre in Brescia throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stands out as particularly significant when one considers the impression, created by the fervent interest in theatrical architecture that characterises the Cinquecento and culminates in the construction of several public theatres in the major Italian towns, that the need was felt for a larger and more adequate location for comedy performances.

### The Lack of a Public Theatre

The first public theatre appeared in Brescia in the eighteenth century, long after that of many other towns. This is especially surprising since, although no works were printed in Brescia on theatre architecture at that time,<sup>1</sup> Andrea Palladio, the prince of this art, who was then drawing the plans for his famous theatre in Vicenza, had close contacts with Brescia. Moreover, after the burning of the Palazzo della Loggia, he was asked to take charge of the reconstruction.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever the causes, lack of funds, or a more or less direct opposition from Venice, the absence of a public theatre meant above all lack of public participation and a limited and select audience. In Mantua, as Alessandro D'Ancona points out, the need to satisfy an increasing demand had led to the opening of a public theatre in 1549.<sup>3</sup> He suggests this was for a select public - the usual guest-audience. A few years later, however, Alessandro D'Ancona talks of a year which he describes as feracissimo because comedies,

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1. Martino Bassi, Dispareri in materia d'architettura, et prospettiva. Con pareri di eccellenti e famosi architetti che li risolvono (Brescia, 1572): though published in Brescia, it deals only with works in Milan.
  2. Vannini, p. 312.
  3. Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, who previously had to rely on other people's hospitality to have a suitable room for his comedies, in 1549 asked the Mantuan architect G. B. Bertani, a translator of Vitruvius's work, to build a permanent theatre, D'Ancona, II, p. 441. On Bertani, see Magagnato, p. 47, n. 1.

ormai non erano più ornamento accessorio di gaudj carnevaleschi o di feste ducali, ma sollazzo d'ogni tempo, offerto al pubblico, che vi accorreva a frotte. Evidentemente ormai la commedia non è più un privilegiato divertimento di pochi, non ha per spettatori soltanto principi e cortigiani, ma l'intera cittadinanza.<sup>4</sup>

The same phenomenon was common to other Italian towns. The public theatre was at first considered an ornament for the ruling prince, as in Ferrara,<sup>5</sup> Rome,<sup>6</sup> and Florence,<sup>7</sup> but in a few years, the interest spread like wild-fire and more space was needed to accommodate larger crowds. Initially, some public theatres were not even permanent and were only later transformed into teatri stabili because of popular need and demand.

Moreover the absence of a theatre in Brescia is surprising when one considers its connection with Venice. Venice was the only Italian city that seems to have had a real concern for a diffusion of dramatic entertainments in all the strata of its society; according to Teresa Muraro, one is almost confronting a real modern theatre policy. Since the beginning of the century, entertainments there were organised in the open air so that everyone could enjoy them:

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4. D'Ancona, II, p. 454.

5. In 1528 the theatre of Ariosto was built, Piromalli, pp. 119-22.

6. In 1513 a theatre was built on the Campidoglio, Cruciani, p. lvii. Although it was made of wood, it accommodated three thousand people, D'Ancona, II, p. 84.

7. The theatre in Palazzo Vecchio was converted into a permanent theatre only in 1586, Nagler, p. 3. For more detailed information about luoghi teatrali in Florence throughout the 16th century, both in private houses and in Palazzo Medici, see Ludovico Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Il luogo teatrale a Firenze (Florence, 1975), pp. 22-9.

une telle situation [...] favorisa dès le début une forme de vie théâtrale publique sans discrimination sociale très particulière, et sans équivalent [...] dans les autres villes italiennes.<sup>8</sup>

The word 'aristocratic' in relation to the theatre in Venice has therefore a different meaning from that in Brescia. In Venice it meant the theatre was organized by the nobility, but was not limited to one place. Plays were put on in many palaces and places throughout the town to suit all tastes:

il y eut donc également à Venise un théâtre patricien, privé, auquel était admis un public aristocratique fermé; mais [...] il ne se limita pas, à la différence des autres cités italiennes, au milieu restreint de la cour, et s'épanouit dans les palais de la noblesse. C'est ainsi que se dessina [...] cette organisation particulière de la vie théâtrale, décentralisée et caractérisée par la concurrence artistique, que favorisera dans la deuxième moitié du siècle une organisation des théâtres publics plus large et plus démocratique.<sup>9</sup>

This policy spread into other parts of the Terraferma, so that in the sixteenth century a number of towns in <sup>the</sup> Veneto had temporary or permanent theatres, the most important of which were in the Palladian projects in Vicenza:

dal 1540 al 1556, cioè dai primi studi nel Veneto e dai primi viaggi a Roma fino all'edizione del Barbaro di Vitruvio, si svolgono le esercitazioni archeologiche sui teatri antichi del Palladio.<sup>10</sup>

As for a theatre in Brescia in the sixteenth century, there is a rather misleading paragraph in the Storia di Brescia. Tracing

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8. Muraro, p. 87. See also, Molmenti, part II, II, chs X-XI.

9. Ibid., p. 87. See also, Nicola Mangini, I teatri di Venezia (Milan, 1974), pp. 9-11.

10. Magagnato, pp. 54-5. See also, Lionello Puppi, Breve storia del Teatro Olimpico (Vicenza, 1973) and Brunelli, pp. 41-62.



the origins of the Teatro Grande, a reference is made to an association called the Ridotto, which, because of the context of the chapter, may be mistaken for the first theatre in Brescia. Talking of the Teatro Grande, it is said that,

fin dal 1564 s'era costituita a Brescia una Compagnia per 'giovare alla patria e potere col tempo innalzarsi a più gloriose operazioni', detta del 'Ridotto'.<sup>11</sup>

The source, according to the footnote, is Federico Odorici's work, Del teatro di Brescia dalle sue origini al compimento de' suoi recenti restauri (1564 - 1863). The initial error lies therefore in Odorici and particularly in the dates of the title of the work. In fact, Odorici, despite the title and dates, gives no evidence that the Ridotto was interested in dramatic activities. Here is the whole passage:

Nell'aprile del 1564 un'eletta di nobili Bresciani radunatisi nelle case di s. Benedetto 'per giovare alla patria, e per potere col tempo [...] a più gloriose operazioni innalzarsi, costituivasi in Circolo o Ridotto cittadino, chiamato allora semplicemente 'La Compagnia'. Principiò la sua missione dal condurre alcuni dei più eccellenti musicisti del tempo e qualche buon letterato, che 'colla sua dottrina porgesse agli uomini [...] viril nutrimento'.<sup>12</sup>

The quotations are taken from the Statuti of the Ridotto<sup>13</sup> as the author acknowledges in his biographical reference. So, presumably he had no other information and in the Statuti there is no evidence of a

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11. Storia di Brescia, III (1964), p. 926.

12. (Brescia, 1864), (hereafter Del Teatro di Brescia), p. 3. Perhaps their first seat was near the Convent of S. Benedetto. The church of S. Benedetto existed since 962 and included many houses in the district near the Broletto. For a description, see Fè D'Ostiani, p. 242.

13. The documents have no title. They are kept in Brescia, Queriniana, Documenti presso il Vecchio Archivio Municipale, MSS. A.VI.142, fascicolo 7 (hereafter Statuti of the Ridotto).

programme dealing with plays.<sup>14</sup> The programme is nothing but one of those typical manifesti which the leading lights of the nobility, and of the literary circles of a town, used to draft relentlessly for the opening and re-opening of one of their academies:

questa nobilissima Compagnia raccolta insieme del corpo istesso della nostra Città, affine di giovare alla patria con ogni poter suo; modo et via proponendo per la qual molti fuggendo l'ocio, et ne gli honesti studi della virtù essercitandosi, possan col tempo à più lodevoli, et gloriose operationi inalzarsi, [...] et strettam. te commandando provvedere, che ivi non di pratici ne si conversi se non con ogni honestà, et buon costumi. Nè vi si giochi à carte, ne à dadi, nè vi sia alcuna sorte di trattenim. ti ad honesti et virtuosi gentilhuomini non convenevoli. [...] Habbiano questi spetial commissione di provvedere di quel numero di Lettori, et in quelle scienze, che considerate le forze della Compag.<sup>a</sup> parerà loro per hora convenire, et di musici parim. te et di una casa se la presente non sodisfacesse, atta, et capace al bisogno.<sup>15</sup>

The Ridotto was in no way similar to the Compagnie della Calza, well-known active organizations set up by nobles with the precise intention of organizing festivities and dramatic plays all over Venice. These operated very successfully throughout the sixteenth century, and were thus perhaps the most important promoters of Venetian theatrical life.<sup>16</sup> The Brescian Compagnia was one of those literary coteries not very dissimilar in their aims from academies. And that the founders of the Ridotto considered themselves in those terms is made clear in their Statuti:

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14. It is likely that Federico Odorici saw in the Ridotto the origin of the Erranti, a 17th century academy which organized one or two plays, see Del Teatro di Brescia, p. 3; but Odorici is the only historian to make the link between the two cultural associations.

15. Statuti of the Ridotto, ff. 1-3.

16. They were associations of gentlemen who organised banquets, dances, regattas and tournaments. As Sansovino said, 'tenevano in festa la città'. Between 1400 and 1526 Sansovino lists forty-three of them. Their statutes were approved by the Council of Ten, and each year every association appointed an architect, a poet and a painter, see Muraro, p. 85, also for the quotation from Sansovino.

vuole che per hora si lascino à parte tutte quelle cose, che in voce, et in vista fanno molta promissione di se; si come sono questi spetiosi, et apparenti nomi di Academia et di Academici, di Principe, et di Magistrati, di leggi, et d'Insegne, et altre cotali solennità, et splendori di grande, et illustre aspettatione: e che ognuno si contenti del semplice nome di Compagnia, et di Ridotto.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the fact that it was obviously an academy, this literary assembly is ignored by all works on academies - from the all-embracing book by Michele Maylender, to minor works on Brescia.<sup>18</sup>

The emphasis given to these quotations and the lingering over the question of the nature of the Ridotto is not out of sheer pedantry. The seven pages of the Statuti are of relevance to the theatre of Brescia, though they do not mention plays, because they shed light on the lives of that set of men of leisure to whom all the Brescian theatre dilettanti belonged. It would, moreover, have been very important for the history of the theatre in Brescia, had the Ridotto been a real dramatic company similar to the Compagnia della Calza, because, though this has never been noted, one of the eighty initial founders was Vincenzo Gabiani.<sup>19</sup> As well as I Gelosi, Gabiani quite possibly wrote a further play, which has presumably been lost, and was an active

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17. Statuti of the Ridotto, f. I.

18. Michele Maylender, Storia delle accademie, with a preface by S.E. Luigi Rava (5 vols, Bologna, 1926-30). Giuseppe Garuffi Malatesta, L'Italia accademica (Rimini, 1688). Ottavio Rossi, Elogi storici di bresciani illustri (Brescia, 1620). Gian Battista Quadrio, Storia e ragione d'ogni poesia (Bologna-Milan, 1739-52). Giambattista Chiaramonti 'Dissertazione istorica delle accademie letterarie bresciane' (8 March 1762), in Dissertazioni istoriche, scientifiche, erudite recitate da diversi autori in Brescia nell'adunanza letteraria' del Signor Conte Gian Maria Mazzucchelli (Brescia, 1765).

19. The list of the signatures of the founders is in Statuti of the Ridotto, f. 10.

participant in play performances in the Broletto. This is an important detail, because it is the only biographical evidence of Gabiani's life that has been traceable, and as such it throws a little light on the cultural background, friendships and mentality of this Brescian author whose plays were staged in Brescia.<sup>20</sup>

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20. 'Che nella Compagnia si possano ricevere di ogni età, et stato d'huomini, si della Città, come forestieri, i quali siano gentilhuomi accostumati, et di buon nome. Saranno alcuni più de beni dell'animo, che della fortuna dotati, i quali con li studi et fatiche loro potranno essere di non poco utile e orname.to alla Compagnia', Statuti of the Ridotto, f. 4.

## Academies

In relation to the theatre, academies in the Renaissance were like workshops, as all the writings about them quoted before widely testify. Some of the comedies written for academies were not even the product of a single author but the result of teamwork - a combined effort of a group of accademici. As Girolamo Tiraboschi describes, these literary clubs were,

destinate principalmente a promuovere le rappresentazioni teatrali, per cui ciascuna aveva il suo proprio teatro, e ciascheduna sforzavasi a gara di rendere il suo illustre e famoso.<sup>1</sup>

But in Brescia, apart from the misinterpreted function of the Ridotto, there is no documented or deducible evidence of a relationship between academies and the theatre until as late as the seventeenth century, when the Erranti set up a small theatre in their residence in 1637 in order to stage performances.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the history of academies in Brescia appears to corroborate the impression that all theatrical activities were concentrated in one place, the Broletto, even if Vincenzo Gabiani belonged to an unidentified accademia in the years of his most intensive activity (as we know from the frontispiece of his play I Gelosi).

Yet, despite this, a brief survey of the history of the academies is worthwhile for two reasons. First, the vicissitudes of the academies indicate what those factors were in Brescia which prevented the establishment of the collaboration academy/theatre that was so successful in other towns and reinforce the hypotheses already discussed.

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1. Tiraboschi, XII, p.1274.

2. Teatro Grande, edited by Deputazione Teatro Grande (Brescia, 1971), p. 8.

Second, it enables a comparison to be made between the situation in Brescia and that in the two major centres of the Bresciano, Salò and Asola, for which there are records both of academies and play performances.<sup>3</sup>

For the effects which it may have had on the staging of plays, the most remarkable aspect of the history of Brescian academies in this period is their ephemeral existence; that is, their apparent inability to become established, and prosper and function with regularity. It is a condition which, even judging from the scanty records available, seems to have been caused more by administrative and economic rather than cultural reasons.

The inadequacy of the records may be crucial because there are no original documents reporting the statuti of the foundation, as we have for the Ridotto, and the usual contemporary sources, such as chronicles, diaries, and histories of the town, never mention academies or the activities inspired by them. Therefore all information derives from sources of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, which are extremely perfunctory, and on which all the works on the subject written in succeeding years are based. Because there is a certain amount of dispute and repetition of details, which, however, do not in any way relate to theatrical activities, the following summary is based on the work by Maylender who also indicates bibliographical sources for each academy.

Rather ironically, Brescia competes with Siena for the privilege of having given hospitality to the first academy in Italy. The Vertunni was in fact founded long before the Intronati. The names

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3. Cocchetti states that not only Brescia, but also Salò, Orzinovi, Chiari, Palazzolo and Rezzato had academies, but he does not refer to a specific century and the other works previously mentioned about academies place these in the following centuries, Del movimento intellettuale, p. 85.

of its members are known, as well as their nickname as accademici. The date of its inception has been the subject of innumerable discussions. Finally Maylender decided that the Vertunni had certainly been founded in the fifteenth century (1426) long before the Intronati (1525).<sup>4</sup> However, it could not be considered a real academy because the Vertunni,

non ebbero regolare assetto accademico [...] per conseguenza la loro adunanza va considerata siccome uno di quei convegni eruditi, che abbondavano nel secolo XV specialmente in Firenze, e da cui si può soltanto inferire che già alla fine del cinquecento [sic] la coltura de' bresciani aveva raggiunto un grado altissimo.<sup>5</sup>

This last statement is more important than the problem about dates, as it draws a picture of the lively intellectual climate in the town at the turn of the century, making the lack of records on academies until the second half of the Cinquecento even more puzzling. It was only between 1563 and 1565 that a group of nobles founded l'Accademia degli Occulti.<sup>6</sup> This was immediately followed, although it is never mentioned, by the Compagnia del Ridotto (April 1564).<sup>7</sup> Before 1586 it was the turn of the Assidui,<sup>8</sup> and by 1590 Count Francesco Gambara had founded the Accademia dei Raviti.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars record the founding of the Dubbiosi, in the middle of the century, in Brescia, but Maylender refutes this. He places it in Venice but admits that the

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4. Maylender, V, pp. 456 - 7. The academy was founded by Bartolomeo Averoldo when he was abbot of the Monastery of Leno, before becoming archbishop of Spoleto. He died in 1480 and therefore he must have founded it before this date.

5. Ibid., V, p. 456. The text reads 'cinquecento', but this must be a printing mistake as the whole passage refers to the Quattrocento.

6. Ibid., IV, (1929), p. 87-91.

7. Statuti of the Ridotto, p. 8.

8. Maylender, IV, p. 90.

9. Ibid, IV, pp. 369-70.

founder was the famous Brescian noble, Fortunato Martinengo.<sup>10</sup>

As anticipated, these institutions do not seem ever to have been involved with the preparation or writing of any play, although by the end of the century this was a well established tradition for academies at one and the same time: one arose out of the ashes of the other. Thus it is not too hazardous to assume that, though other academies may have existed in the sixteenth century (certainly one by the middle of the century to which Vincenzo Gabiani himself belonged, as recalled in the frontispiece of I Gelosi), the obscurity of records on them is a sign of their ephemeral existence.

Their appearance and sudden disappearance may have been caused by financial difficulties common to them all, as is documented for the most important, the Unanimi.<sup>11</sup> This lack of capital could not only account for the non-existence of comedy productions, but also lend support to the previously mentioned idea, that the Broletto was used and Venetian hospitality accepted simply because of lack of adequate funds to cover the cost of staging plays.

The Statuti of the Ridotto spell out with vigour the need for self-support and for a strict control over a regular contribution from every member. One of the regulations was that,

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10. Maylender, II, (1927), pp. 224 ff. In none of the works of these academies in print is there a sentence about or a suggestion of a play. The edition of the Carmina acad. occultorum [sic] (Brescia, 1570) contains xylographies of the imprese of the Occulti; they represent the emblems, not pictures of activities.

11. Carlo Pasero, 'L'Ateneo di Salò. Quattro secoli di vita accademica', in Il Lago di Garda. Storia di una comunità lacuale. Atti del Congresso internazionale promosso dall'Ateneo di Salò (2 vols., Salò, 1969), I, p. 59 (hereafter 'L'Ateneo di Salò').



uno de' gentilhuomini suoi habbia il carico di riscuotere il denaro, che di volta in volta sarà imposto, et di guardarlo, et tener conto della entrata et della uscita di esso à libro: pregando però ciascuno ch'havrà ad isborsarlo, ch'egli voglia mandarglielo à casa cortesem. te et come si conviene, ò non se lo far chiedere almeno più d'una volta.<sup>12</sup>

Time and again there are pleas to the rich mecenati to ensure not only the necessary financial support but also a suitable official residence. Alessandro Luzzago, the founder of the Rapiti, persuaded the Count Francesco Gambara to support the Academy and to give it hospitality in his own house, so that in some works Gambara is considered the real founder.<sup>13</sup>

The informality of these academies and their limited potential may also explain why some of them restricted their functions to literary discussions held in private houses, as in the case of the Accademia Mondellana (1551), whose activities were limited to conversations on literary topics, and which was certainly less of an academy than the Vertunni.<sup>14</sup>

The same impression of economic instability that almost certainly led to dependence on Venice, is to be found in Salò.

Giacomo Bonfadio, one of the best known and controversial Brescian figures of the Renaissance was writing, in 1543, to the Count Fortunato Martinengo, asking him to promote and support an academy on the Lake of Garda, at Salò near his home:<sup>15</sup>

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12. Statuti of the Ridotto, f. 3.

13. Maylender, IV, pp. 369-70.

14. Ibid., IV, p. 56.

15. He was born in Gazano, a village near Salò.

I castelli, ch'io fabbrico col pensiero, [...] sono che io vorrei fare un'Accademia sulle rive del Benaco o in Salò o in Maderno ovvero in Toscolano,<sup>16</sup> e vorrei essere il Principe io, leggendo principalmente l'Organo di Aristotele e le Morali, poi attendendo alle altre cose pulite, ed a quelle Lettere, che son da Gentiluomo. Così al Benaco verria onore, ed a me onore ed utile, e quella contentezza insieme, la qual fin qui non ho potuto ritrovare nè in Corte, nè in palazzi de' signori.<sup>17</sup>

But he was unsuccessful; Fortunato Martinengo opened the Dubbiosi in Venice, and Salò found other protectors and financial backers for its academies.

For Salò too, apart from the Historia della Riviera di Salò by Grattarolo, one has to rely on the derivative evidence of the following centuries. As for Brescia, this tells of the alternate opening and closing of academies in that piece of land which, as noted before, sometimes challenged Venice for the splendour of its water festivals, and its paradisaal situation:

Dinanzi à porta Sole, ha il golfo di cui si è ragionato delizioso al possibile, per lo quale le sere de' giorni estivi su picciole barchette si và diportando la gioventù di Salò: sonando diversi instrumente, e cantando cosi maschi come femine, e dando, e cogliendo per gli spettatori, e perse [sic] , solazzo mirabile.<sup>18</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the Accademia Modesta came into existence but no further information of it is known.<sup>19</sup> In the middle of the century the Concorde appeared, which 'fioriva felicemente nel 1545' according to Tiraboschi.<sup>20</sup> 1564 is the year Tiraboschi specifies for

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16. All centres of the Lake of Garda under Brescia.

17. Tiraboschi, VII, part I, p. 169. See also, Odorici, Storie bresciane, IX, p. 209.

18. Grattarolo, p.78: the word underlined is in the original work, togliendo. See also these words by Agostino Gallo, Le venti giornate settima aggiunta, p. 144: 'Quel gran Lago Benaco [...] fa veder al mondo, che vi è (se tanto si può dire) il ritratto del Paradiso delle delitie'.

19. Maylender, IV, p. 54.

20. Tiraboschi, VII, part I, p. 169.

the birth of the most famous academy, Accademia degli Unanimi,<sup>21</sup> and he mentions the re-appearance of the Concorde in 1575.<sup>22</sup> The uncertain and spasmodic fortunes of these academies in Salò are epitomized by the history of Gli Unanimi, whose patron was the Capitano della Riviera e Provveditor di Salò, the highest office of the Venetian government in that area.<sup>23</sup> The most important comment on the irregular fortunes of this institution was made by its most famous member, Bongianini Grattarolo, the playwright of Salò, who welcomed the revival of the Unanimi as,

una Accademia di Giovani Nobili detta Unanimi, i quali si  
solevano esercitare intorno le belle lettere, e alla  
musica [...] la quale per diversi rispetti, per un tempo  
s'era già stata sopita nell'otio.<sup>24</sup>

This was by way of thanks for the patronage of the newly arrived Alessandro Pallavicino, the Venetian Provveditore di Salò e Capitano della Riviera, under whose spell of government all activities in Salò enjoyed a real Rinascimento. The academy collapsed again later, and had to be revived in 1597 under the name of Ristoratori dell'Accademia, meeting in a private house.<sup>25</sup>

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21. Tiraboschi, VII, part I, pp. 169-70. See also Maylender, V, p. 383.

22. Tiraboschi, VII, part I, p. 169.

23. From the middle of 1441 Salò was governed by a Brescian podestà to whom Venice entrusted the power of criminal justice, tax collection and the military command; from 1441 he was joined by a Provveditore from Venice who dealt with civil administration, see Pasero, 'L'Ateneo di Salò', I, p. 45, n., 14 and 15.

24. Grattarolo, pp. 78-9.

25. Garuffi, p. 203. The most up to date work is Pasero's 'L'Ateneo di Salò' and there is no mention of any play.

As regards the theatre, there are indications of play performances in Salò and of lost comedies by Salodian writers. What is difficult to establish is whether the existence of these cultural centres inspired such enterprises, or whether, as in Brescia, they were the result of the initiative of individual Venetian patrons.

Bongianni Grattarolo, in 1599, referring to earlier years, seems to suggest that the Unanimi was interested in plays,

... davano gratiosi spettacoli, e di sene, e di altro,  
ai Popoli.<sup>26</sup>

The word sene is rather intriguing: as was suggested previously when detailing the comedy performances, it could mean 'scenes', in which case the author refers to the habitual apparati, or it could refer to Seneca. It would then be the one and only clue regarding performances of tragedies in the Bresciano, and it would not be too far-fetched to see in these tragedies a source of inspiration for the tragic plays of Grattarolo himself.<sup>27</sup> The word 'Popoli' is also an innovation in the picture of the theatre in Brescia, which could be taken as evidence that in Salò the theatre was not such an exclusive form of entertainment as it was in Brescia. Perhaps the relatively smaller size of the town favoured a more mixed society. Though Bongianni Grattarolo himself emphasises, in another episode of the life of his town, that 'molti fanciulli di Nobile' in a procession were dressed up as little angels, there is an interesting example of a festival organized by artisans. This occurred on the 16th of April

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26. Grattarolo, p.78.

27. Altea (Venice,1556), Astianatte (Venice,1581), Polissena (Venice,1589). Neither in the prefaces to the tragedies, nor in his Historia della Riviera di Salò, is there any indication of where they were performed.

to mark the arrival of the Provveditore Stefano Tiepolo, when Salò arranged not a tournament for nobles, but un pallio di barcaioli.<sup>28</sup>

In the same period of the play performances described by Bongianni Grattarolo, 'Ugoni poeta in lingua volgare dolcissimo',<sup>29</sup> wrote two comedies, unfortunately lost, but with the rather intriguing titles, Baccanali and Carestia. Unfortunately it has not been possible to establish whether they were written for the academy because even as early as 1688 the list of all the members of the academy 'non si e' potuto rinvenire intero'.<sup>30</sup> The most comprehensive reference concerns the lost comedy La Castrucca or Castruccia, written by Grattarolo himself in 1563. And ironically it is his own report which gives added weight to the supposition that academies played no role at all in fostering the theatre, and that the *credit* for this should go to the Venetian authorities. His comedy was in fact commissioned by the Provveditore of Salò on the occasion of the visit of the Cardinal of Augusta, the Duke of Mantua and the archbishop of the Principato Vescovile of Trent, who were obviously received with the traditional pomp and apparati. It was dramatized with great success in the 'Palacio', the official residence of the Provveditore, in a very large and splendid room overlooking the lake,<sup>31</sup> as

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28. Odorici, Storie bresciane, IX, p. 206. The source where there may be a colourful description is Misc. Benacense, Cod. 61 della raccolta Odorici. Some of these documents are in the Queriniana with the number N.I.2: I have been unable to find such description, but some papers are illegible.

29. Grattarolo, p.40.

30. Garuffi, p. 211. See also, Salò, Library of the Ateneo of Salò, Documenti sugli Unanimiti, MSS, II, 37. For the lost comedies, see Leonardo Cozzando, Della libreria bresciana, nuovamente aperta, (Brescia, 1685), p. 160-1. Giuseppe Brunati, Dizionario degli uomini illustri della Riviera di Salò (Bologna, 1837), p. 144.

31. Grattarolo, p. 71.

Grattarolo proudly described it. This evidence suggests that the play was acted in the official residence of the Venetian authority, the Palazzo Provveditoriale, with its colonnade and loggia,<sup>32</sup> although the Town Hall had been built three years before, in 1560.<sup>33</sup>

Despite these few testimonies, there is some reason for suggesting that the hypotheses formulated for Brescia are also valid for Salò: lack of money and adequate space and the commissioning of the local letterati as comedy-writers on state occasions or for private entertainments, three aspects which support the overall idea that in the territory, as well as in Brescia, the Venetian authorities played a greater role, than hitherto realised, in encouraging the theatre.

The same pattern is found in Asola. The extant sources seem to indicate that academies left the task of organizing theatrical activities either to the wealthiest local families or to the Venetian patrons.

Though it would be interesting to form a picture of the background of festivities against which Carlo Turco composed and staged his play, Agnella, for an important group of French visitors in 1550,<sup>34</sup> despite thorough research through the Parish archives and the uncatalogued mass of records kept in the soffitta of the Town Hall, the only sixteenth century record on the subject remains the prologue to the comedy.

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32. Pasero, 'L'Ateneo di Salò', I, p. 44.

33. Gaetano Panazza, 'Le manifestazioni artistiche della sponda bresciana del Garda', in Il Lago di Garda. Storia di una comunità lacuale. Atti del Congresso Internazionale promosso dall'Ateneo di Salò (2 vols, Salò, 1969), I.

34. Dedicatory letter from Lelio Gavardo to Nicolò Manassi prefaced to the play by Turco, Agnella. See also, ch. 'Carlo Turco' of this thesis.

According to this prologue, the play was recited in una 'casa', which may have been one of the houses of the Turco family, as, according to the prefatory letter, the French visitors were its guests. It is also possible it was at another private house, that of the Beffa-Negrini, which, according to an oral tradition, used to have a private theatre.<sup>35</sup>

Domenico Bernoni, a nineteenth-century scholar, adds further information about the actors: the comedy was played by members of the Accademia dei Virtuosi.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately some other facts he gives about Carlo Turco weakens his credibility.<sup>37</sup> The information about the academy is transcribed from the first historian from Asola, Lodovico Mangini, who writes that,

i Virtuosi eressero un'Accademia Nobile, nella quale dalli giovinetti venivano recitate belle orazioni et elogi in lode or degli uni or degli altri, et proposti e sciolti emblemi et enigmi, ora il tutto in disuso.<sup>38</sup>

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35. It is rather difficult to locate which of the many houses belonging to the Turco family, which no longer exists, may have been used, because there was no major palace and all palaces have undergone severe modifications so that, even if it were possible to identify the building, it would be of no help in establishing the type of stage used in any comparison with Venice.
36. Domenico Bernoni, Notizie biografiche dei ragguardevoli asolani (Oneglia, 1863), pp. 221-3. Domenico Bernoni, Le vicende di Asola (Rome, 1876), p. 150.
37. Bernoni in Le vicende di Asola calls Agnella a tragedy and places the performance in 1558, p. 160.
38. Brescia, Queriniana, Lodovico Mangini, Istorie di Asola fino all'anno 1723, MS, MS\* VI vol. b, pages are not numbered. This copy is easier to read than the copy kept in the Asola Municipal Archives.

But Ludovico Mangini himself neither mentions the play<sup>39</sup> nor the comedies. It is therefore very likely that Domenico Bernoni has, on analogy with other towns, associated the performance of Agnella with the academies' usual interest in comedies. However, in the scattered sixteenth-century documents about academies in the Brescian territory, there is never any suggestion of a link between academies and plays. The only details about festivities again concern the Palazzo del Provveditore. In most cases the only information is on 'sonadori'.<sup>40</sup> There is only one, hardly legible, reference to a comedy and perhaps to a Sacra Rappresentazione:

1553 Il Maestro Orfeo dei Regazoni e compagni sonadori,  
condutti [...] per il Carnevale. £ 45 e si cata  
rampegarola [sic] per la commedia e nel [...] <sup>41</sup>

Thus in the second centre of the Brescian territory the theatre is also found to be a form of entertainment confined to private houses, written and probably performed by local letterati and enjoyed by a select audience, and, as in the case of Brescia, neither in Salò nor Asola is there ever mention of the presence of troupes of comedians.

Before examining the legislation through which the municipal authorities and the Venetian government controlled the theatre, it is necessary to discuss the position of popular entertainments in

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39. The year 1550 is dedicated to the preparations for the feared war, see above, both MSS copies.

40. Asola, Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 15, fascicolo A/2, busta XV, see especially October 30, 1528 and the years 1547 and 1554 (the days are not indicated). However these few notes only allow a glimpse of the brilliant and culturally intense life enjoyed by Asola in the Renaissance.

41. The place of the Sacra Rappresentazione (1546), mentioned in Asola, is in fact unspecified and is presented as part of festivities given by the Venetian Provveditore Borbo in his palace, see above, unnumbered folio.



Brescia. This is because they were subject to the same legislative regulations as the theatre, and because their very poor showing may be attributed to the reasons, some already mentioned, which confined the comedies to one exclusive palace.

## Popular Forms of Entertainment

The elitism of the Brescian theatre in the sixteenth-century is also demonstrated by the complete absence of public performances in those places which were the traditional stronghold of the popular theatre such as the ghetto and convents. Nor is there ever mention of any osterie<sup>1</sup> giving hospitality to a troupe of actors. Convents, which played an important part in Venice as popular teatri stabili, pass unmentioned, in spite of the large number to be found in Brescia.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is an indication of an official prohibition by the government of Venice, but there appears to be no written evidence of this. Whether Venice had any power over the domestic rules of convents is difficult to ascertain, but Venice's open interference in the moral conduct of religious orders is seen in a ducale of 1553, where 'per reprimere i licenziosi costumi dei Monasteri comunica pene contro

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1. See especially, Raccolta di privilegi, ducali, giudizi, terminazioni e decreti pubblici sopra varie materie giurisdizionali, civili, criminali ed economiche concernenti la città e la provincia di Brescia, edited by Federico Mazzucchelli (Brescia, 1732). For the famous decrees against spettacoli and comedies issued by Cardinal Borromeo specifically asking osterie not to give hospitality to troupes of actors, see Manzella and Pozzi, p. 22.
  2. All works previously mentioned in relation to Venetian theatre underline the function of convents as popular teatri stabili. In Brescia, between 1516 and 1517, when the Venetian government burned down several convents and churches which had given protection to enemies during the war of the League of Cambray, there were fifteen convents for men and fourteen for women; around 1527 anonymous chroniclers also mention the infiltration of heresy in the convents and the concern of the Venetian government because of this: see Cocchetti, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia, pp. 88-9.

i trasgressori dei Canonici'.<sup>3</sup>

As for the Jewish element, a real ghetto did not exist, although there were Jews in Brescia as everywhere else. The orders for expulsion were frequent, together with the usual episodes of intolerance. In May 1509 there was a pillage of Jewish houses and shops,<sup>4</sup> and the harassment also spread into the province. There are several ducali directed against the Jews of Salò as early as the fifteenth century, but they infer that the Venetian government issued them to satisfy the wish of the local population:

nolumus eos fideles nostros [...] hebreis in Salodio habitatione dare.<sup>5</sup>

This hostility in Salò sharply contrasts with the attitude of the nearby court of Mantua, where Jews were favoured to such an extent that they played a unique role in the development of the theatre there:

Abbiamo qui un fatto nuovo e curioso: le recite di commedie fatte dagli Ebrei mantovani per ordine e col consenso, e ad ogni modo alla presenza della Corte. La Università israelitica di Mantova era, a quel che emerge dai documenti, una specie di compagnia comica permanente al servizio de' principi: aveva almeno nel suo seno individui sempre pronti a far da attori.<sup>6</sup>

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3. Brescia, the State Archives, Cancelleria Prefettizia Inferiore 1528-1533, Ducale 8 September 1533, N. 231, MS.
  4. Storia di Brescia, II, pp. 234, 370 and n., 2.
  5. Brescia, Queriniana, Miscellanea Benacense, Registro dei diritti del Comune di Salò, p. 81, MS.
  6. D'Ancona, II, p. 398.

In Venice, Jewish performances were confined to the ghetto, and Christians were not allowed to attend,<sup>7</sup> but their very existence is an indication of that diffusion of the theatre among all classes of people, which is so typical of Venetian life in the Cinquecento.

Thus the absence of these popular luoghi teatrali, meant that the spettacoli popolari of Brescia were confined within the churches, so determining the genre of the popular dramatic entertainments organized there, and perhaps also hastening the demise of a local secular drama.

Among scholars there are lively controversies over the reasons for the decline of popular dramatic forms in the sixteenth century, and on the role played by the new comedy in suppressing them.<sup>8</sup> What this long standing debate takes into consideration is the value of the folk element in theatre as a genuine and vital expression of a community, and its potential dramatic quality capable of introducing new life and new motifs into a dying theatre,

étroitement liés aux structures sociales et aux mentalités collectives. Ces manifestations s'insèrent parfaitement dans la société du temps:

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7. D'Ancona, II, p. 429 n. I.

8. See Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis, Laude drammatiche e rappresentazioni sacre (3 vols, Florence, 1943), I, pp. xvii-xviii and D'Ancona, II, ch. III.

elles en soulignent les hiérarchies et en renforcent les solidarités; surtout, elles traduisent tous les aspects, parfois les plus inattendus, du christianisme et de ses multiples dévotions. Elles marquent aussi, parfois d'une façon violente, certains idéaux, des rêves et des évasions [...]. Pour toutes ces raisons la fête [...] s'impose à l'historien comme l'une des<sup>9</sup> expressions les plus fidèles de la 'culture' du temps.

It is therefore perhaps worthwhile to look at the conditions of the popular theatre in Brescia in the sixteenth century, to see whether the obvious poverty of a local folklore tradition was aggravated by external factors that indicate a firm control on any forms of popular festivals.

Historians point out a change in Brescia in the general style of popular entertainment in the sixteenth century. Religious processions became more and more frequent, while 'pagan' sports disappeared. The atmosphere is more sober. More calm and controlled is the participation of the crowd lining the processions; more subdued is the tone:

Con la seconda metà del secolo, dunque, nelle manifestazioni della vita ufficiale cittadina si andò via via determinando un clima di maggiore severità; anche le adunate popolari, cadute ormai del tutto in disuso le corse quattrocentesche che avevano dato luogo a tante sfrenate plebee gazzarre, si volsero con preferenza alla celebrazione delle ricorrenze religiose con universale partecipazione della cittadinanza.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Heers, p. 146.

10. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 373.

It is difficult to trace the thread of this change from the end of the previous century. Not many fifteenth-century documents are available in printed form, and generalizations on the merry-making of the previous century are perhaps only based on Bongianni Grattarolo and Federico Odorici. In each of their works there is an evident moral disapproval of festivities, so that it is difficult to assess their reports of the colourful and jocund life of the 'vulgo', with its lustfulness and Bacchanalian rites during which,

il popolo bresciano già immemore de' passati guai ne profittava e cogliendo pretesto di non so quale anniversario de' tempi malatestiani, corendo la Pasqua del 1434, facea bagordi e danze licenziosissime nel prato vicino alle fosse della città verso Montebello.<sup>11</sup>

Towards the end of the fifteenth century there was,

un' infamia alimentata (probabilmente) dalla setta religiosa dei Giovannali, per cui sovra i colli deliziosissimi del Garda uomini e donne d'ogni età e d' ogni sesso, ingannati [...] dai sacerdoti, si raccoglievano la notte in alcune cappelle, dove cantando e ballonzando confessavano pubblicamente i loro peccati per commetterne poi di più nefandi [...] a quel lurido baccanale.<sup>12</sup>

Other Bacchanalia are described later in the Isola del Garda where 'gravi scandali accadevano sovente, e massime nelle pasquali solennità'.<sup>13</sup> However, whether the colourful life of the Quattrocento was real or exaggerated, life certainly became more banal and 'puritan' in the Cinquecento.

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11. Odorici, Storie bresciane, VIII, p. 214; his source is a municipal provvisione.

12. Ibid., VIII, p. 323.

13. Ibid., IX, p. 205; his source is the collection Miscellanea Benacense, MSS (see above, n. 5) as he indicates on p. 206 n., I.

Communal outdoor games were reduced to 'falò'. The chronicles are scattered with reports of bonfires organized for religious or civic events, often sponsored by the town authorities, presumably within the limits of the sumptuary laws.<sup>14</sup>

There were no longer the corse for horsewomen which were a traditional part of the festivities of the Virgin Assunta each August, when,

a preludio dello spettacolo si cimentavano le donne  
(e quali donne ognuno comprenderà) [...] amazzoni  
che lo statuto chiama fanciulle. <sup>15</sup>

The only forms of dramatic entertainment performed out of doors could be said to be the trials and burning of witches at the stake, still rather frequent events even in the sixteenth century, until Venice severely put an end to the practice after 1540, when sixty witches were burned in Val Camonica.<sup>16</sup> These were probably the 'dramatic entertainments' which gave 'theatrical' fame to the valley - in the play La Zingana (1550) by Artemio Giancarli the servant teases the procuress Agata, asking her whether she had been 'in frega con il collegio di Valcamonica eh?' <sup>17</sup>

Although the interest in apparati and feste is evident from the large crowds settling everywhere to watch tournaments, there are no records of dramatic performances staged outside and the only sacre rappresentazioni staged outdoors are recorded from

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14. For some descriptions of falò, see Mercanda, pp. 156, 165, 166, and Caravaggi, f. 53.

15. Odorici, VIII, p. 214.

16. Cocchetti, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia, pp. 89-90.

17. I.4., in Teatro veneto, edited by Giovanni Antonio Cibotto (Bologna, 1960).

the previous century. In the mountain valleys around the town in Val Sabbia there is a record, in an old satirical rhyme, of a strange combination of a sacra rappresentazione and a joust, which began after 1478. The rhyme calls it 'mostra militare di S. Giacomo'. A mostra was the concluding procession of the sacra rappresentazione as well as the first or last act of a joust.<sup>18</sup> Another sacra rappresentazione was organized in Val Camonica for the arrival of Caterina Cornaro and is made fun of by the son of Mantegna in the same letter in which he ridicules the trionfo in Brescia.

1497. 10 Maggio Valcamonica.

Io vidi el di di pasca representar come un cristo  
sovrano adam: et eva incertis baltreschis cū angelis  
at cui davano misericordia: et eravi un diavolo in  
forma di un serpente posto sovra legato in un fighor  
carco di frutti, el quale invita madonna eva amerenda:  
a et mille altre poltronarie: che missiere Io podesta:  
et cossi messiere lo vedono con turba et tutti li de  
gli artisti cominciarono aridere cominciano el riso  
casco il palco et domenedio cō gli angeli ruinò que  
fuit tragedia quanto a coloro Io so per me risi a  
sufficiencia. 19

But perhaps, more than being awkward imitations of sacre rappresentazioni, as Luzio calls this one, they were examples of dramatic forms

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18. Ugo Vaglia, Curiosità e leggende valsabbine (Brescia, 1947), pp. 84-5. For a definition of a mostra, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, VII, pp. 880-1.

19. Mantua, The State Archives, Archivio Patrio Gonzaga, Esterni, N. XLVIII, n. 2. 1599, letter by Ludovico Mantegna to Francesco Gonzaga, MS. See spettacolo with the 'Jeu du Paradis': see Le théâtre populaire européen, edited by Leopold Schmidt (Paris, 1965), pp. 193 ff.



deriving from popular traditions. In this case, it would have been one of those Paradeisspiel which were particularly typical of the Austrian folklore in the sixteenth century. They usually had as their main subject the creation of the world and the beginning of human life in the Garden of Eden. This idea of a form even more traditional than the sacra rappresentazione, may establish a line of continuity between these rustic performances and the only form of secular drama recorded in Brescia in the sixteenth century: La Festa della Vecchia. This collective entertainment was popular in the Cinquecento, when it was "acted" in churches at night, until 1546 when it was abolished because of the 'irriverenti tumulti'.<sup>20</sup> Paolo Guerrini calls it an innocent and 'solazzevole auto-da-fè',<sup>21</sup> and suggests that this rite derived from the dramatization of a page in the Gospel describing St. Peter's mother recovering from a disease, recalling that in the Middle Ages, this figure became the archetype of the quarrelsome and grousing mother-in-law. But the fact that the luogo teatrale in the Cinquecento was a church may associate this rite with those plays which were common in Tuscany at the time, which were called La

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20. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 373. I have not been able to find the original source. An entertainment with a similar name still takes place in the county of Brescia during Lent. But it is probably a recollection of the old one in a milder form. It consists of the burning of an old hag, symbol of Lent, on a bonfire on the main square.

21. Paolo Guerrini, 'Il giovedì della vecchia', L'Eco di Bergamo, 16 March, 1944, p. 2.

Condanna della Vecchiaccia and of which the written text has survived. It was a trial in dramatic form with a chorus declaiming against the figure of Lent who was to be burned for having killed the merry time of Carnival.<sup>22</sup>

Proper forms of orthodox religious drama in churches were performed in Brescia at least until the middle of the sixteenth century, although authorities from time to time prohibited them because of casualties caused by falls of baltresche<sup>23</sup> during the acting. The most frequently quoted is the sacra rappresentazione of the Passion of Good Friday in 1536, in the church of S. Francesco. Pandolfo Nassino described the collapse of the stage with some accuracy of detail:

uno di legni ge rompete la testa [...] uno putino se schavezzo li gambi, et deli altri che sgorbiato la testa e brazi, fino quello che faceva X sto se rompete alquanto la testa [...] pareva la giente esser seguitati dali Inimici. 24

The actors were local people, perhaps even youngsters, if the putino were among the actors, and the church was evidently crowded. The anonymous writer who has fully copied the page by

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22. Le théâtre populaire européen, pp. 105 - 111. Heers considers similar feste at the origin of the comic popular theatre and also analyses them as expressions of the collective subconscious of some groups of people, ch. IV, especially p. 128.

23. It was a kind of scaffolding, see Salvatore Battaglia, Grande dizionario della lingua italiana (9 vols, Turin, 1961 - ), ad vocem.

24. 'Tragica rappresentazione della "Passione"', Illustrazione Bresciana, 16 March 1907, p. 8, the article is signed 'p.g.'. The work by Pia Sartori Treves, 'Sacre rappresentazioni e misteri', Illustrazione Bresciana, 1 April 1906, pp. 1 - 3, does not contain indications on Brescia.

Pandolfo Nassino, mentions this as the only religious drama in Brescia, but there is another sacra rappresentazione, recorded by Giambattista Palazzo in 1548, during which once again the stage fell:

Adi 29 fu principiata la demonstratio de sancto Nazaro et Celso et circa il mezo dela historia cascò la sena et alquanti personi se feceno male grandissimo. 25

It would be interesting to know who were in fact the organizers and the actors of these religious performances, in order to find out whether they were straightforward dramatizations of the liturgical rites of Good Friday recited in Latin, or free compositions in the local dialect. Pandolfo Nassino's evidence is rather ambiguous:

nel tempo che in ditta demonstratione era ordinato che se piliasse detto mese Jesu. 26

'Ordinato' may stand for 'according to the tradition of the Gospel' or for 'written' in the script. If the actors were local people, the stories would be presented in the local regional Brescian dialect, but, if the actors were members of the Confraternite of Disciplinati or Flagellanti, who perhaps were not terrieri <sup>27</sup> the language would be Latin or volgare:

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25. Giambattista Palazzo, p. 388 (my italics). Nassino too calls this kind of religious play demonstrazione, see below, n., 27.

26. p.g., 'Tragica rappresentazione della 'Passione', p.8 (my italics).

27. This was the word used in many 16th century works to define the local population.

iniziatrice di questa Passione di S. Francesco fu certamente quell'antichissima Congregazione del terz' ordine che in quella chiesa fioriva già dal secolo XII. 28

Further evidence that the tradition of sacre rappresentazioni, composed and recited in the local dialect, was more alive than has so far been credited, not only in Brescia but all over the province, is provided by other texts.

In support of an older and more native tradition, there can be quoted a laudario on Christ's Passion dating back to the early fifteenth century,

Cum fo tradit el nos Signor  
E vel diro cum grant dolor, 29

which, as the two introductory lines above show, is in Brescian dialect. It was found by Giuseppe Bonelli in the Archives of the Brescian Hospital with the designation 'istromentario della disciplina di s. Cristoforo'. According to the introduction, it was to be sung inside the church on the eve of Good Friday by four singers alternating two by two.<sup>30</sup> Two other undated passioni were written in the contado. A 'Passione di Cristo' which was composed by the Order of S. Valentino of Breno<sup>31</sup> is written in

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28. p.g., 'Tragica rappresentazione della "Passione" ', p. 8.

29. Giuseppe Bonelli, 'Una "Passio Christi" in dialetto', Brixia Sacra, 5 (1914), pp. 3 - 19. This Passio is also mentioned by Paolo Guerrini, 'Memorie costantiniane e il culto della Croce e della Passione a Brescia attraverso i tempi', Memorie storiche della diocesi di Brescia, serie V (1934), pp. 31 ff.

30. 'per quator cantores quorum primi duo incipiant primos duos versus qui respondeant per alios duos cantores; deinde primi duo cantores procedaant ad alios quatuor versus et plus non dicant primos versus et secundi semper respondeant primos duos versus, usque ad finem', Bonelli, 'Una "Passio Christi" in dialetto', p. 113.

31. A small town towards the Val Camonica.

Italian with strong forms of local dialect.<sup>32</sup> One was performed in Asola in 1546 about which there is the following description:

Orfeo e Compagni sonadori de violini d'Asola per aver sonato questo Carnevale nel Palazzo del Pr Barbo £15. E si rappresenta la Resurrezion et semper la Pasione e Giovanni Antonio de Fideli fa le finte, adorerà orpello per figurare la risurezione, fa le ali d'angelo e di demonio, dipinge la cassa del Monumento e fa la Corona di Pilato, le calze del diavolo fatte a fiamma la [illegible word] dipinte a color de carnasone e M.ro Piasentino fa la scena in S. Andrea per la rappresentazione della Resurrezione di N.S.G.C. 33

The other was composed in Orzinuovi<sup>34</sup> by the frate minore Stefano da Quinzano.<sup>35</sup> Paolo Guerrini describes it as undoubtedly a local text:

un vero 'dramma' disposto per la rappresentazione e nel quale entrano in vera azione scenica numerosissimi personaggi. È evidente [...] che doveva probabilmente servire a qualche confraternita di Orzinuovi per una sacra rappresentazione locale. L'ispirazione è di ambiente locale, e vorrei quasi dire familiare. 36

However what appears to have been an active interest in drama, with the likely participation of players speaking in dialect from all sections of the local society, had disappeared by the second half of the century.

The most celebrated Brescian printer, Lodovico Sabbio, published in 1560 a sacra rappresentazione forestiera, a Roman laude: La representatione della passione del N. S. Jesu Cristo,

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32. It is fully transcribed by Guerrini, 'Memorie costantiniane', pp. 46 - 54.
33. Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 15, fascicolo 4/2, busta XV, the sheet is unnumbered and there is no indication of the author. Other documents in the same busta indicate that the full name of Orfeo was Orfeo Ragazoni o Regazoni.
34. A small town in the plain between Brescia and Mantova, near Asola.
35. A small town between Brescia and Bergamo.
36. Guerrini, 'Memorie costantiniane', p. 32. The text is preserved in the convent of the Cappuccini in Porta Monforte in Milan.

secondo si recita e rappresenta dalla degnissima Compagnia del Confaloniere di Roma il Venerdi Santo nel Coliseo. Aggiuntovi la sua resurrezione.<sup>37</sup>

In addition Paolo Guerrini confirms that later in the century the sacre rappresentazioni ceased to be animated forms of drama with living characters and that their place was taken by 'la rappresentazione plastica e permanente con varie statue'.<sup>38</sup> This means that they too underwent the same process of s drammatizzazione as the trionfi, described in the chapter on aristocratic entertainment.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore it is of great relevance that, most likely by the middle of the century, both the secular and religious drama in their popular forms were prohibited because they were hazardous to safety and on account of the new dispositions issued by the Council of Trent.<sup>40</sup> This is important, not because one wants to claim that rustic performances were of greater artistic value than the new Renaissance comedy, but because these popular entertainments, which contemporary and later Brescian chroniclers ridiculed because of their simplicity and grossness, and which were forbidden on moral and legal grounds as 'gazzarre religiose', 'irriverenti

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37. Brescia (1560).

38. Guerrini, 'Memorie costantiniane', p. 33. It is perhaps not a coincidence that in the 1550's two painters, Benedetto and Battista Virchi were commissioned a series of paintings on the via crucis for the church of S. Francesco where sacre rappresentazioni used to be performed, see Storia di Brescia, III, p. 699.

39. Ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis,

40. p.g., 'Tragica rappresentazione della "Passione" ', p. 8. Unfortunately no original documents are mentioned and I have not found any elsewhere supporting the information he gives.

tumulti', and 'sfrenate plebee gazzarre', indicate an embryonic readiness to create popular dramatic forms. Today increasingly frequent studies recognize that their primitiveness and vulgarity had an intrinsic value which offset the most characteristic features of the 'aristocratic' comedy: spontaneity against repetition of content and structure; impromptu creativity against inspiration caged by literary rules; novelty of rough details against the polished plots moulded on ancient models; spontaneous vulgar laughter against efforts to imitate neoclassical humour. And finally it is recognized that these popular entertainments had the same value that is today attributed to the 'happening'. As Salvador Dali said, 'réaliser un happening, c'est créer une situation qui ne peut se reproduire deux fois de suite'.<sup>41</sup> To prevent these popular expressions meant to stop the unrefined, the untidy, the chaotic and the unpredictable; an attitude correlated to the political directives of those times:

Alle lotte di fazione dell'età comunale si guarda come ad una follia sanguinaria e fratricida ormai superata, che ispira un rassicurante confronto con l'ordine e la tranquillità regnanti sotto il felice governo dei principi e delle aristocrazie. Ma come quelle aspre lotte erano segno di vita e di progresso, fecondo contrasto dialettico [...] questa 'pace' era la quiete dell'inerzia e dell'oppressione, sintomo di decadenza materiale e di aridità spirituale: e soprattutto non era concordia civile. 42

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41. Gilbert Tarrab, 'Qu'est-ce-que le "happening"', Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 1968, 20, p. 7; Salvador Dali is quoted from an interview in the Nouvel Observateur, 25 May 1966, p. 28.

42. Ventura, p. 377.

In the same way the courtly theatre of the time in Brescia did not represent a concordia di gusti between the popular tradition and the neo-erudite theatre. It was not even a mixture of popular and aristocratic art, with the elimination of the dress of the popular elements. It was the predominance of one genre over the other.<sup>43</sup> However this does not imply that popular entertainments were of a higher quality. Indeed it is unquestionable that, unless further evidence is found, their variety and quality was rather poor.

As mentioned in the introduction, Ettore Caccia dismissed this as the fault of the local populace who had no ideas and no initiative.<sup>44</sup> But this does not explain why in the other major Renaissance centres, where, as was seen, the theatre was less monopolized by the nobility, particularly in Venice, the social class which most vigorously and successfully participated in the staging of all forms of dramatic entertainments, was not the populace, but the 'middle class' of artisans. Unless it is assumed that in Brescia, this class had an inborn hostility or indifference towards the theatre,<sup>45</sup> it can be argued that other factors intervened and contributed to prevent the Brescian 'middle' class from displaying the same fervour of initiative as that of the Venetians. One of these factors may have been the impact of the numerous sumptuary laws.

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43. D'Ancona, II, ch. III.

44. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 527.

45. For the great importance of workshops and commercial activities in Brescia in the sixteenth century see 'A Town Without a Court' in this thesis.



## The Sumptuary Laws

The previous chapter ended with this question: why did the Brescian middle-class not play an active role in the organization of theatrical activities, when the middle-class in other towns nearby, for instance in Venice and Mantua made a significant contribution? It was suggested that a possible answer could lie in the repressive economic effects of the sumptuary laws which, as evident from a number of documents, hit Brescia throughout the century.

This hypothesis stems from two assumptions usually made by critics writing on sixteenth-century theatre. The first of these concerns the collaborative nature of theatrical activity: it has been found that in those cities where theatre flourished it became successful through the co-operative efforts of the nobility and the middle-class.<sup>1</sup> Generally the nobility provided the money and the middle-classes provided the labour and the materials (for instance, wood for the construction of the sets and stage machinery, wool and silk for the elaborate costumes).

The second assumption concerns the reasons for staging plays and entertainments. Festivals were organized not exclusively as 'princely toys',<sup>2</sup> but also to promote advantageous commercial activities for the state and for the trading classes. Pompeo Molmenti specifically describes them in Venice as,

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1. J. Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, translated by S.G.C. Middlemore, revised and edited by Irene Gordon (New York-Toronto-London, 1960), p. 285. Muraro, p. 87. Nino Borsellino, 'Rozzi e Intronati. Pour une histoire de la comédie à Sienne au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in Drammaturgie et société. Rapports entre l'oeuvre théâtrale, son interprétation et son public aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles, Nancy, 14-21 avril 1967, edited by Jean Jacquot with the collaboration of Elie Konigson and Marcel Oddon (2 vols, Paris, 1968), I, pp. 149 ff.
  2. The famous definition by Francis Bacon interpreted by Nagler, p. 4.

one of the means for assisting the development of industry by tempting foreigners to the city, where they bought and sold and spent money, and so became a source of gain to the population, an industry in itself. 3

According to him, festivals were held because at that time they had the same function that 'industrial exhibitions' today have.<sup>4</sup>

For Cristoforo Tentori,

la magnificenza dei pubblici spettacoli era una delle principali arti de' Principati inservienti da principio a popolar le Città, e poscia ad accrescer l'industria, ed il traffico nazionale. 5

Turning now to the records which have been found and which were presented in the previous chapters of the thesis, it is clear that the theatre in Brescia was not a collaborative effort between the nobility and the middle-class. Moreover, there is no indication in the documents examined that in the sixteenth century, festivals in Brescia were organized as modern world fairs for the purpose of promoting business for the artisans. There is never a direct or indirect reference to such a purpose in the records describing jousts or tournaments. It seems therefore that Brescia lacked that political and intellectual resolve to reconcile the traditionally different motivating forces of the various categories of citizens, and that festivals and celebrations were staged only when they satisfied the purposes of the ruling class and not in the economic interest of a wider range of people.

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3. Molmenti, part II, I. pp. 93-4. For a detailed list of festivals, see also part II, I. ch. IV and part II, II. ch. XIII. Raimond Morozzo Della Rocca and Maria Francesca Tiepolo, 'Cronologia veneziana del Cinquecento', in La civiltà veneziana del Rinascimento, pp. 197 ff.
  4. Molmenti, part II, I. p. 81.
  5. Tentori, I. p. 231. It is, however, important to point out that financial reasons are actually given to justify the refusal of a joust and a comedy in the Provvisione issued on January 19th, 1530, see ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis.

This situation may have been worsened by a firm implementation of the sumptuary laws. This is not to claim that they were ever passed specifically as prohibitions against the spettacoli of the middle-classes, nor that they were specifically designed to act against the theatre. If the hypothesis suggested before is correct, the theatre was affected because in Brescia sumptuary laws were issued as economic measures and not as moral sanctions. With regard to this difference, it is important to refer to a study on sumptuary laws and the decadence of industry in Milan from the second half of the sixteenth century. Its author states that, already in the Cinquecento, sumptuary laws were issued for two distinctive reasons: either as moral sanctions or as economic actions, and the latter group 's'intreccia [va] alle questioni più vitali intorno all'industria e al commercio'.<sup>6</sup> This distinction is relevant to this study because it may explain why the laws had a harder effect in Brescia than in Venice, and answer these questions: why did they affect the theatre in Brescia and not in the Capital, where they were issued just as frequently? How could they affect the activities of one town and not of the other? Only if it is accepted that they acted economically as repressive measures against certain trades, is it possible to see how sumptuary laws may have affected the theatre.

Sumptuary laws were not peculiar to Brescia, The Venetian authorities even created the Provveditori sopra le Pompe

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6. Ettore Verga, 'Le leggi suntuarie e la decadenza dell'industria in Milano 1565-1750', Archivio Storico Lombardo, 1900, serie III, 13, pp. 51 ff.

to control expenditure and occasionally in Venice sumptuary laws even specifically prohibited theatrical activities.<sup>7</sup> However the reasons for which they were issued in Venice were different from those in Brescia. Consequently their actual effect on public entertainments differed. As the detailed article by Felix Gilbert proves, their main purpose in Venice was moral rather than economic. There the government seemed to have been genuinely alarmed by the moral laxity of the town. In fact the first series of sumptuary laws was issued after the defeat of Agnadello in 1509, as a consequence of the widespread feeling that the defeat was perhaps just punishment by God for moral laxity. So that,

the view that political salvation depended on calling a halt to moral decline found expression in a legislation regulating the conduct of social life [...]. On 13th March, 1512 the Senate decided that, in the serious situation in which the city found itself, it was urgent 'to placate the anger of Our Lord' and to establish a permanent magistracy consisting of three provveditori with the function of preventing 'immoderate and excessive expenditure'. 8

Further decrees followed, but their effect was practically nil. Venice was aware of the economic importance and significance of festivals for the town and for the welfare of the people as its constant tolerance shows. Thus the effects of sumptuary laws in Venice were only sporadic and short-term:

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7. G. Bistort, 'Il Magistrato alle Pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia', Miscellanea di Storia Veneta, 1912, serie III, tome V, pp. 226-30.
8. Gilbert, pp. 278 ff.

the government, after first of all prohibiting comedies in 1509, and then permitting them again, attempted, in 1521, and 1553, to put an end to the scandals [...] forbidding representations at certain seasons and other provisions which were continually renewed, revoked, or violated, and Francesco Sansovino declares that le commedie avevano sempre gran corso. 9

In Brescia, on the other hand, sumptuary laws seem to have operated with greater effectiveness and force. As suggested, one reason for this may be that in Brescia the provisions against pomp and luxury were never decreed in the genuine belief that they would be a corrective to a critical moral decline. They seem to have been enforced indiscriminately in peace time and war time, or rather, particularly in peace time, just when the general economic conditions were most suitable for the promotion of feste. Also the Brescian historian Carlo Pasero argues (though still with some reservations) that the basic 'finalità' of these laws was economic and social.<sup>10</sup>

A look at the relevant dates shows the constant restatement of these laws. The best source of information, apart from the actual Provvisioni still in manuscript in the Queriniana, is the book already quoted by Andrea Cassa, Funerali pompe e conviti, which is significantly subtitled Escursione nel Vecchio Archivio Municipale and which is practically an edited copy of the manuscript provisions regarding luxury and pomp. From 1539 Caravaggi can be used to check that no decrees escaped Cassa, or had been lost

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9. Molmenti, part II, II, p. 17.

10. Storia di Brescia, II. p. 371.

by the time he wrote his account.

The first sumptuary laws go back to the fifteenth-century,<sup>11</sup> then become more frequent at the beginning of the new century, which, according to contemporary sources, was a period of prosperity:

21 April, 1503,                      23 April, 1505,                      11 April, 1508<sup>12</sup>

There are no provisions just before or immediately after Agnadello, as the Brescian nobles were certainly not concerned with the reasons for the defeat of Venice, and for Brescia in any case it did not mean the return to the old municipal freedom, but a number of years under French domination. From 1508 there is a gap until 1527.

This is very interesting because it appears to coincide with a gap in comedy performances, and could be an indication that for political reasons, which will be discussed in the next section, there may have been a general prohibition during these years, the record of which may be lost. Then:

16 April, 1527                      19 July, 1532,                      13 August, 1532  
21 October, 1533,                      24 January, 1534                      8 January, 1535,  
8 January, 1538,                      12 March, 1548,                      25-27 March, 1548<sup>13</sup>  
16 March, 1554<sup>14</sup>                      9 May, 1556<sup>15</sup>

Moreover these sumptuary laws do not even discriminate between the various occasions on which display is allowed. In Venice they were issued for three distinct categories: dress, housing and festivities,<sup>16</sup> and the various dramatic entertainments were

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11. Cassa, pp. 62-90.

12. Ibid., p. 92; 104; 107.

13. Ibid., pp. 112-40.

14. Caravaggi, f 152v.

15. Ibid., f. 187.

16. Gilbert, p. 279.

specifically indicated, thus allowing more freedom for modification and alteration. In Brescia the long and even absurd lists of foodstuffs which were not to appear during the conviti, and the catalogues of garments, jewels and armour which were forbidden, do not reflect any moral concern but look more like precise financial stringencies:

170. A niuna donna licito sia haver ornamento alcun attorno ale zacchette qual exceda il valor de ducatti quattro, ne coda ad esse zacchette, nisi le fesseno scusar veste le qual tamen non excedano mezo brazo.

180. A niuna donna licito sia haver cossa alcuna de cenzer che exceda il valor di ducatti tre.

190. A niuna donna licito sia portar mantelli, sbergni, mongini, rubboni ne faldoi sive cerchi in habito alcuno.

200. A niuna donna licito sia portar manege dove intrino più di quarte cinque fin in sei di panno d'oro, d'ariento e di seta, e se le manege saranno d'altra robba tanto sia mazor et menor la quantità quando sara mazor e menor l'altezza de la robba. 17

The seriousness of the economic damage caused by the sumptuary laws is testified by the attempted revolt which took place in Brescia in 1556. The reasons for the complaints are contained in the letters written by the Brescian authorities to Venice on the 4th of March:

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17. Provvisione, 21 April 1503, see Cassa, p. 98. See also for specific regulations, 'Li sartori recamatori intagliatori o altre persone cossi maschuli commo femine che taliasseno overo facesseno, recamasseno, intaliasseno, lavorasseno tal veste ovvero habiti, se saranno accusati debano pagar ducatti quindese [...] et star mesi trei in presone et essere banditi da Bressa et distretto bressano per anni un', Provvisione 16 April 1527, in Cassa, pp. 113-4; see also, Provvisioni 25 and 27 March 1548, *ibid.*, p. 135. For the nobility and prostitutes there would always be an exemption provided, see Provvisioni 19 July 1532, 7 April 1561, in Cassa, pp. 115, 159.

Habbiamo presentito che alcuni Cittadini, si sono posti a far sindacato, facendo sottoscrivere et convenire con loro altri, per contrappondersi alla parte im materia delle pompe. 18

This was followed by another letter two days later reiterating the reasons for the protests 'per opponersi alla parte circa le pompe et conviti',<sup>19</sup> and also describing a conventicola, that is a seditious gathering:

questa mattina si sono vedutti sotto la lozza della piazza et sentito il segno del fin della predicha del Domo alla qual erano Clarissimi Signori Rettori, sono andati nella corte del Palazzo del signor Capitanio et quì [sic] essendo coadunato insieme bon numero di persone gioveni al numero de circa duscento. 20

Above all they urged Venice not to tolerate any sign of revolt, and not to show indulgence towards a delegation of representatives who had organized a journey to Venice, because tolerance would be contrary to the 'interesse di sua Serenissima per la tranquillità et quiete vivere universale'.<sup>21</sup> The fracture between the cittadini and the highest municipal authorities is epitomized by the composition of the Consiglio Cittadino: in 1546, Brescia was the first important town under Venice to expel all those citizens 'macchiati di meccanica' and started proceedings against those applicants of whom there was any suspicion of 'ignobilità'.<sup>22</sup>

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18. Cassa, pp. 146-8 (my italics).

19. Ibid., p. 148.

20. Ibid., p. 149.

21. Ibid., p. 147.

22. Ventura, p. 113. One of Brescian comedy writer, Agostino Gallo, was accused of 'esercitare bottega', see Brescia, Queriniana, Archivio Storico Civico. Processi per nobiltà e civiltà a vari e cause sostenute dalla città di Brescia, 1277 MSS.



These records seem thus to suggest that sumptuary laws were implemented with far greater rigour in Brescia than in Venice by the oligarchy dominating the Consiglio Cittadino. And therefore it does not seem improbable that sumptuary laws may have affected the theatre because they prevented the middle classes from using the basic materials essential for the staging of the apparati and because they undermined the trade and the welfare of that class of citizens and craftsmen which had been the major organizer of entertainments in the Middle Ages and which, in the major towns of the Renaissance, was still responsible for their continuing prosperity.

In an attempt to establish the various degrees of influence over the theatre in Brescia, it is necessary to point out that all available documents seem to indicate that the most severe promoter of the sumptuary laws was the government of the town and not Venice, who limited her interference to the approval of the proposals of the Brescian Deputati Pubblici through the ducali, which from Venice gave the Podestà the responsibility for the enforcement of the various laws:

vi mandiamo [...] la copia de la parte presa nel senato n.ro [...] in materia del vestir, et dele pompe, et etiendo dele Carrette, e cocchi, come in quella: e vi commettono con l'autorità del detto senato, che dobbiate darli la debita esecuzione facendola ancora publicari

Data in nro Ducali Palatio Die 27 septembris 1549.<sup>23</sup>

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23. Brescia, the State Archives, Cancelleria Prefettizia Inferiore 1546-1553, Ducale 27 september 1549, ff. 113-4. See also Cancelleria Prefettizia Inferiore 1528-1533, Ducale 6 May 1554, ff. 25-.

This legal procedure is confirmed by the opening of the ducali, as well as by certain remarks in the chronicle of the notary Caravaggi:

[16 March 1554] ... provisioni sopra li pompi banchetti et altri cosi e li mandarono a far confermare alla signoria. 24

[May 1554] si fu publicati li Capitoli et parti et provisioni in materia di pompe e banchetti con la conferma di Venezia al nome di Dio. 25

It is also of relevance that these documents show how sumptuary laws were presented and approved following the same procedure as the request to perform plays.<sup>26</sup>

However, although it looks as if the offender principally responsible for the damage the theatre may have suffered on account of the sumptuary laws is the 'monopoly of the local nobility', it must be remembered that the reports of the Rettori occasionally express concern for the money leaving the Venetian territory, and that according to the Brescian historian Agostino Zanelli, through the sumptuary laws passed by the Consiglio Comunale in Brescia Venice protected its merchants and commerce to the disadvantage of the prosperous merchants in Brescia.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, perhaps, Venice did not intervene more severely simply because her zeal was surpassed by that of the Brescian nobles.

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24. Caravaggi, f. 152v.

25. Ibid., f. 156v.

26. See ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' of this thesis, n., 58.

27. Zanelli, Delle condizioni interne di Brescia, pp. 85 ff.

### Theatrical Legislation and Censorship

The disentanglement of the responsibilities belonging to the three authorities interested in entertainment - the Consiglio Comunale, Venice, and the local church - is one of the most intriguing problems relating to the prohibitions against the theatre in Brescia. It is interesting, not for the sake of proving the guilty party, but because the decrees represent the first embryonic steps towards theatrical legislation. They are the first attempt to legally control those theatrical activities which, in the course of a few decades, had spread everywhere, to become a mass phenomenon involving moral, religious and economic matters. They also help piece together the mosaic of the relations between Venice and its territories of the Terraferma, and provide some elucidation of the legal proceedings used by the Serenissima to achieve a degree of flexible centralization and controlled autonomy.

The overall action of these authorities against the theatre can be divided into two groups. In one can be listed the absence of provisions for a public theatre, the separation of the theatre from the local people, and, bearing in mind the reservations expressed in the previous chapter, the sumptuary laws. They affected the theatre at its source. For, as stated previously, in so far as they were an obstacle to the initiative of the middle classes by prohibiting the necessary expenditure, and in the long run impoverishing that very class of artigiani traditionally the major organizer of public entertainments and their chief financial beneficiary, they had a longer lasting and deeper influence than the edicts, striking at the very root of the theatre, influencing not only its evolution but its very nature.

To the other group belong the famous edicts against comedies,<sup>1</sup>

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1. The fact that - with few exceptions - the decrees listed comedies and not tragedies suggests that the theatre was visualized as a festive activity, linked with enjoyment, fun, idleness, vice - hence the condemnation on moral and religious grounds.

which were meant to have the immediate and direct effect of strangling the excessive popularity of the theatre. They were effective in so far as they disrupted its growth and expansion at regular intervals, but their weakness lay in the capacity and willingness of the various authorities to enforce them, as for instance, in Venice.<sup>2</sup>

The numerous well-known decrees issued against the performance of plays by various governmental authorities in many towns throughout the sixteenth century further confirm that the theatre was considered not as the private expression of a single artist, but as the *product of* society; a phenomenon which by its very nature involved a whole community. Thus it caused unease because it spread rapidly, furtively, unpredictably and therefore was very difficult to control and check. Laws were not directed against the artist, but against the theatre. They did not express concern about the individual work of a particular writer, but attacked the theatre as a public form of entertainment; as a feature of public life.

At the same time, as Ferdinando Taviani convincingly argues in his well documented work on the struggle of the Counter-Reformation against the theatre, these decrees and their incidence over the development of the theatre run the risk of being overestimated if judged outside the religious and moral environment in which they were conceived, because their effect would have been minimal had they not been inspired by genuine beliefs that the theatre was linked with immorality, with the

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2. The numerous prohibitions and their immediate unaccountable breaks, sometimes by the authorities themselves, in 16th-century Venice has been a puzzle to historians, see Molmenti, part II, II, p. 6, and Muraro, p. 87.

forces of evil, sin, illusion, laziness and lust.<sup>3</sup> This argument is valid also for the Brescian territory.

In comparison with Venice, Brescia seems not to have been flooded with prohibitions. The actual divieti are one provvisone by the Consiglio Comunale (1530) forbidding a comedy, a series of edicts published by the Diocese (1545) and some ducali against masks, and the decrees already quoted prohibiting the sacre rappresentazioni and the Festa della Vecchia after 1546 mentioned by Carlo Pasero but concerning which no original documents have been found.<sup>4</sup>

The only provvisone issued by the local municipal authorities rejecting the application to perform a play,<sup>5</sup> is one of the most complete and informative documents of theatre legislation of the mid-sixteenth century before the massive attack of the Counter-Reformation against the theatre.

On the 19th of January 1530, the Consiglio Comunale considered a request by a group of the local youth to stage a joust and a comedy to celebrate the peace between the Emperor Charles V and the Pope (the end of the war of the Holy League). After a session of the Consiglio Comunale and presumably a debate, the request was rejected by a ballot.

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3. Ferdinando Taviani, La Commedia dell'Arte e la società barocca. La fascinazione del teatro (Rome, 1969), especially, pp. xxvii ff. and 91-143.
  4. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 373. The documents in the Archivio Arcivescovile in Brescia have not yet been catalogued. However, the archivist Don Masetti-Zanitti who is in charge of this task has given his assurance that there is no documentation which can throw light on the attitude of the Church towards the theatre before the 1580's.
  5. Carlo Pasero referring to this Provvisone as an example of the desire for merriment after the long threat of a war, also mentions a similar one dated 2 January 1530, but this document has disappeared from its folder. It probably contained the sentence quoted by Pasero 'quia magis ira accenditur,' Storia di Brescia, II, p. 320, n., 3.

The document written in Latin<sup>6</sup> is preceded by the names of all the Consiglieri and Deputati Pubblici.

The Deputati Pubblici are empowered to take measures to prevent the joust and the comedy from being held in the city of Brescia.

Since it has come to our knowledge that some young men of our town endeavour to hold some tournaments and present some comedies as a mark of jubilation for the longed for peace bestowed on us by Our Redeemer through the boundless wisdom of Our Magnificent Lord; and since it is obviously preferable that such affairs be not undertaken at present, because it is evident that the city itself is utterly exhausted with many severe disturbances and upsets of the past wars, it is heavily burdened by debts and it suffers so many and such tribulations that can hardly be described; since such deeds excite rather than placate the divine wrath, and we know that there is the plague in our town and its province, as well as in the nearby towns and provinces, let us not be blind to the dangers that such affairs could carry. It is therefore decided that ten Deputati Pubblici should be and are from this moment made responsible for such affairs, and will appear before the Magnificent Captain and the Vice-podestà,<sup>7</sup> who are to decide if, and when it is necessary, a certain joust or comedy are to be prevented. And whatever is decided and done by the said Deputati Pubblici or by a majority of them, is to be considered valid as if it had been decided and enacted by this council, such decision having been approved by 78 votes in favour against 21 against.

This document offers material for a number of observations. Its reference to a few contemporary circumstances is a means of placing the edict in a historical context. This is necessary in order to assess the validity of the official reasons given for the refusal, in the light of other documents and against a background of religious controversies which may have affected the overall attitude of the legislative authority towards the theatre.

The first motive given for the ban is the state of financial instability due to past wars and heavy taxation. No war had hit Brescia since the end of the League of Cambrai (1516). Therefore the words of the Consiglieri must refer not so much to any internal state of war as

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6. Brescia, Queriniana, Provvisione, CVII 532, 19 January 1530, ff. 204 - 5v. For the original text see the end of this chapter, Appendix 1.

7. Both positions were held by Cristoforo Capello, see the list of the Rettori in Brescia, in Bonelli, L'Archivio di Stato in Brescia, p. 103.

to the unease and fears deriving from battles raging close to the borders, and from the economic pressure put on its territories by Venice during the war of the Holy League.<sup>8</sup>

A supplement to, and a means of verifying the authenticity of the picture given by the Provvisione is offered by the intensive correspondence - almost a letter a day - sent by the Venetian Provveditore Generale Polo Nani and the Capitani Cristofal Capello and Alvise Darmer throughout the autumn of 1529 to the Venetian Government. From these letters it is possible to glimpse an emergency situation because of the constant danger of an invasion by the Spanish Army which had kept the Venetian authorities in Brescia on the alert.<sup>9</sup> All this gives ground for wondering whether during the time of the War of the Holy League, when Brescia saw its boundaries threatened, there was a ban on the performance of plays and whether the request by the local youth implied a breaking of a previous interdiction. It would be interesting to know when the emergency situation started, in the light of the performances staged in the Palazzo del Capitano in 1526. If the authorities were already on the alert at this time, this would confirm that comedies were staged there because they were prohibited in the town, and also that the Palazzo of the Rettori was a sort of 'neutral zone' for the theatre at least in those years.

But the emergency situation due to the war cannot be taken as the only reason for the absence of play performances. It is reasonable to suggest that the difficult financial conditions of the town mentioned

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8. For the economic pressure, see Agostino Zanelli, 'La devozione di Brescia a Venezia e il principio della sua decadenza economica nel sec. XVI', Archivio Storico Lombardo, 1912, serie IV, XVII, pp. 21-100 and by the same author, Delle condizioni interne di Brescia, pp. 68 ff. For the uncertainties of Venice economic measures towards Brescia in those years and their contradicting results, see Pasero, Dati statistici e notizie intorno al movimento della popolazione bresciana, p. 16.

9. Marino Sanuto, I Diarii, edited by Rinaldo Fulin and others (58 vols, Venice, 1879-1903, LII, ( 1898 ) for the letters from October to the middle of November from Brescia, see pp. 69-242.

in the Provvisione were deliberately emphasized to hide a general feeling of hostility towards the theatre. Only a fortnight before, the same authorities had allowed other forms of entertainment in public to celebrate the same occasion, the end of hostilities:

Adi 4 (genaro) 1530 comenzono a far la processione de la pase et se fecero tre di continui cum grandissima alegreza et fallò per tutto il paese.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the joust for which a permission was requested at the same time as the comedy, may have been organized later in the same year,<sup>11</sup> while there is no evidence that the comedy was ever staged.

Also by the New Year, the situation was considered so politically stable by the Venetian authorities that as soon as the 24th of December 1529, the day of the conclusion of the peace,<sup>12</sup> they allowed the Brescian fuorusciti to re-enter the town.<sup>13</sup> And although the Council of Ten in Venice on the 16th of February 1530, issued a prohibition, this cannot be considered connected with that of Brescia: as the Venetian decree itself declares, it was only a repetition of a similar decree issued in Venice in 1520 which, as in the best Venetian tradition, had been disregarded several times, so much so that immediately it was not observed and the Council of Ten itself had to amend it, and gave permission to celebrate the coming Carnival and to perform 'honeste' comedies.<sup>14</sup>

It is also surprising that the Provvisione does not mention at all the death of one of the Capitani in Brescia only a few days before, on the 13th of January.<sup>15</sup> Much more convincing is the fear of the plague. Rumours about it were reported in the above-mentioned

10. Palazzo, p. 343; see also ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis, n., 11.

11. See ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis, n., 11.

12. Sanuto, LII, p. 382.

13. The decree of the Council of Ten is reported by Sanuto, LII, p. 381.

14. Sanuto, LII, p. 538.

15. A letter from the Capitano and the Vice-Podestà announced his death due to 'catarre', Sanuto, LII, p. 484.



correspondence with the Serenissima in November;<sup>16</sup> although the actual town was affected less than the countryside, a considerable number of people died from it.<sup>17</sup> It could be thought that the comedy was not allowed because of a continuous fear of its recurrence, (the epidemic had disappeared by November). And it may have been so. However, there is evidence, as we have seen above, that a joust was performed in January. And although it is possible that the local authorities allowed gatherings of people in the open, but not inside, it nevertheless seems unlikely that fear of the plague would preclude the performance of a comedy which would attract a relatively small audience while allowing a joust to be performed which could attract thousands of people.

Going back to the text of the Provvisione, the first justification refers to domestic troubles. The first thought is that Brescia had one of the most prosperous and famous industries of arms and weapons in Italy and Europe, and therefore these were perhaps more easily available to the local population and that this led to severe problems of law and order. But the possibility that the theatre was forbidden or not encouraged in public places is not supported by other documents. The various works on this period of Brescian history record assaults and murders in the town and province. But they all seem the result of individual vendettas stemming from the arrogant rules of conduct of some members of important local noble families.<sup>18</sup> There is no

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16. Sanuto, 27 November, LII, p. 301.

17. Storia di Brescia, II, pp. 314-7. Pasero, Dati statistici e notizie intorno al movimento della popolazione bresciana, p. 18.

18. Storia di Brescia, II, pp. 206 ff. and III, pp. 3-5 and 848.

mention of mobs and gangs raving around the town and the examples describing isolated murders do not seem to point at a much higher rate of violence than in other Renaissance towns and they do not seem to justify the words 'turbines et tumultus'.

The vicissitudes of the arms industry in Brescia in the first part of the century offer perhaps an explanation. According to Carlo Pasero the dramatic historic events of those years (1509-1517) destroyed the arms trade ('le cento ricche botteghe sudette vi si ridussero in sette povere'),<sup>19</sup> forced a great number of armaiuoli to emigrate to Milan or more distant places and the traditional trading centres in town were able to open again only towards the end of the century.

It is in fact more likely that the fear of local internal disturbances expressed in the Provvisione was an allusion to problems deriving from an internal moral instability. This indeed may have been the real motive for banning comedy performances in Brescia and may account for the absence of public performances of plays. It was the traditional fear that the theatre would be a medium for public expressions of dissent. But the hypothesis is not too groundless taking into account that Brescia was one of the richest breeding grounds for the ideas of the Reformation which reached the greatest spread between the 1520's and the mid-1540's. Although so far there is no history of the Reformation in Brescia,<sup>20</sup> it is agreed that Brescia was one of the most receptive centres of Protestant

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19. Storia di Brescia, 'Armature e armi bianche', III, pp. 795 ff. 'Le armi da fuoco', III, p. 833 ff. 'Le vicende dell'arte delle armi', III, pp. 846 ff.

20. Paulo Guerrini the most important historian of the Church in Brescia, promised a detailed study but unfortunately it was never published. See, 'Le condizioni religiose di Brescia intorno alla metà del Cinquecento', Memorie Storiche della Diocesi di Brescia, 1933, IV, (pp. 71-94), p. 87 n., 38.

ideas; that it was 'uno dei focolari più ardenti della propaganda nella regione del Veneto'<sup>21</sup> partly because of its proximity to Switzerland and Northern Europe, and also because of its continued contact with the large groups of Bresciani who had emigrated because of economic pressures.<sup>22</sup> By early in the middle of the century, heretical ideas had seeped into all grades of society; among the nobility, the people, the intellectuals and the clergy, with activists promoting open air debates to counter Sunday sermons, so spreading the new ideas in the countryside.<sup>23</sup> The nobles offered shelter and protection to the most sought after heretics from outside, and even prominent citizens occupying high positions in the administration were suspected of heresy.<sup>24</sup>

The spread of heretical ideas in intellectual circles, the close links certain Brescian literary figures had with Erasmus,<sup>25</sup> the likelihood that Andrea Ugoni, a playwright, gave protection to persecuted dissidents, even suggest a potential influence on the theatre: Emilio

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21. Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia (6 vols, Rome-Milan, 1910-53) I, part I (1910), p. 459. See also Guerrini, 'Le condizioni religiose di Brescia intorno alla metà del Cinquecento', pp. 82-3.

22. Guerrini, 'Le condizioni religiose di Brescia intorno alla metà del Cinquecento', pp. 79 ff.

23. 'Alchuni frati inquisitori che qui referiscano cose grande [sic] di Bressa [...] tra le quali di alchuni artesani che vanno la festa per le ville et montano sopra i alberi a predicare la setta lutherana a popoli et contadini': this is part of a report from the Venetian Ambassador Mattio Dandolo in Rome to the Council of Ten, dated 14 June 1550, Pio Paschini, Venezia e l'inquisizione romana da Giulio II a Pio IV (Padua, 1959) p. 42. Paschini also reports the foundation of a community of Anabaptists in Valtrompia by a Dominican.

24. 'Proprio nelle due famiglie degli Ugoni e dei Martinenghi noi troviamo particolarmente aiutata e protetta l'eresia nel suo carattere soprattutto calvinista e anabattista', Pio Paschini, 'Publio Francesco Spinola "Un umanista disgraziato nel Cinquecento"', Nuovo Archivio Veneto, 1919, year XX, tome XXXVII, p. 65. Paolo Guerrini, 'Due amici bresciani di Erasmo', Archivio Storico Lombardo, 1923, serie V, year L, part I, fascicoli I and II, pp. 172-180.

25. See the ch. 'I Gelosi. Imitation of the structure' of this thesis, n., 18-19.

De' Migli, chancellor of Brescia, who kept in close contact with Erasmus and translated one of his works, is recorded to have been a keen animator of comedies in Brescia.<sup>26</sup>

The dissent was lively, difficult to control and bold in its manifestations. Often tinged with a strong sense of protest against all manifestations of authority - the Spanish, the French, taxation, the Rettori, the Bishops - it took the form of libels, satires and pasquinades,<sup>27</sup> often written down in Brescian dialect<sup>28</sup> or painted as slogans on walls.<sup>29</sup> Occasionally the protest was expressed in a form of theatre. A blasphemous procession in the form of a dialogue was organized on the night of the 23rd of March 1527, by some 'gentil homeni':

Uno comenzava et diceva 'Al dispetto de Dio;' le altri  
rispondeva: 'Ora pro nobis.' Dopo comenzava dallo capo  
a dire 'Uncha vergina Maria' li altri diceva: 'Ora pro  
nobis.'<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately the report stops here because the chronicler, by his own admission, was repelled even by talking about it, but it is evident, to his disgust, that the 'drama' was not interrupted. Another and more

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26. Nassino, f. 158. See also above, n., 25.

27. Paolo Guerrini, Satire e libelli bresciani del 500 (Milan, 1936), extract from Archivio Storico Lombardo, 1936, LXII. Guerrini's main source of information is the chronicler Pandolfo Nassino.

28. In Brescia, satirical poetry, partly in dialect, had a remarkable fortune at the beginning of the sixteenth century, see Ugo da Como, Andrea Marone, edited by the Fondazione Ugo da Como of Lonato (Lonato, 1959), p. 28.

29. A deliberation from the Venetian Senate dated 7 February 1526, acknowledged a letter received from the Rettori informing 'esser sta trovati [...] bollettini diffamatori in loci publici affixi, contra essa coità, et consiglieri' and because 'tale cattivo esempio non si deve tollerare', it ordered the Rettori to implement the necessary punishments, Venice, the State Archives, Senato Terra Senato I.R.24, 7 February 1526, MS.

30. Nassino, f. 60. The episode is also quoted by Tacchi-Venturi, I, part I, p. 459.

elaborate 'heretical' play was written by an anonymous author on a religious topic, Dialogo religioso di un Zoccolante, domenicano et heremita frati con uno scholare, and its importance lies in the fact that it was 'uno scritto di propaganda protestante' with some parts of it written in Brescian dialect giving it a 'carattere popolaresco.'<sup>31</sup>

Such fervour and turmoil of ideas, mostly arising from the influence of the Reformation, were particularly likely to create polemical controversies against the theatre. In the Provvisione there is the admonition that comedies 'divina ira [...] provocetur'. It is an echo of the idea of the theatre as a sinful institution that might provoke God's anger and punishment.<sup>32</sup> Though this concept of the theatre as 'negotium diaboli' did not originate in the Cinquecento, it acquired new relevance when about the middle of the century,

il teatro, da evento di un particolare tempo dell'anno, (il tempo di festa, il Carnevale), e di precisi ambiti di élite (le corti e l'Accademia), tendeva a crearsi un suo spazio stabile nella Città [così] si rendevano di nuovo attuali, sulle labbra dei predicatori, le condanne degli antichi Padri.<sup>33</sup>

An insight into the violent arguments for or against the theatre

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31. The text is printed in the collection of D. Cantimori and E. Feist, Per la storia degli eretici italiani del secolo XVI in Europa (Rome, 1937), pp. 17-45.
32. For similar fears among the Venetians after the defeat of 1509, see Gilbert, op. cit.
33. Taviani, p. xxvii. For the traditional hostility towards the theatre in the Middle Ages, see Lorenzo Stoppato, La commedia popolare in Italia (Padua, 1887), pp. 17 ff. Vincenzo De Amicis, L'imitazione latina nella commedia italiana del XVI secolo (revised edition, Florence, 1897, pp. 49 ff.). Ugo Bucchioni, Terenzio nel Rinascimento (Rocca S. Casciano, 1911), pp. 91 ff. Antonio Stäuble, La commedia umanistica del Quattrocento (Florence, 1968), pp. 225-32. For the years during and after the Counter Reformation, see Michele Scherillo, La Commedia dell'Arte in Italia (Turin, 1884), ch. VI and Taviani, op. cit.

is also to be found in the Prologo of Vincenzo Gabiani's play I Gelosi which was performed in the Broletto at Brescia in 1545. The author himself, or else Vincenzo Metello who recited the Argomento, used the prologue in a defence against,

alcuni, che mai non refinano con agre, e licentiose parole, di voler porre la Comedia in abbominatione del mondo, dicendo quella essere opera immonda, e diabolica. [...] perciò che ella poco altro contegna, che lascivie, e cattività: e che da esse piu mal, che ben si appari, e altre loro maledittioni.<sup>34</sup>

The accusations are not new and occur in other prologues, written in different parts of Italy,<sup>35</sup> and perhaps it is no coincidence that they all sound rather similar to those found in a prologue to a translation of Terence's Eunuchus published in Venice in the same period, 1544.

Defending comedy, the anonymous translator says that,

il qual [Terentio] piu dilettaudo insegna à vivere  
Ne la Comedia, che non fan la Predica  
Qual'cun che pensa d'esser gran Theologo,  
Gridando; e spaventando il rozzo popolo.<sup>36</sup>

But the vehemence of Gabiani's defence suggests that more than answering some academic dispute about the educational validity of Terence, he is repudiating an acrimonious personal attack. There is even a note of fear in the words with which he continues his defence:

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34. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo.

35. Piccolomini, L'Alessandro, Prologo: the attack is against the local bigots.

36. Terence, L'Andria et l'Eunucho di Terentio, per Gio. Giustiniano di Candia (Venice, 1544), (hereafter L'Andria et l'Eunucho, 1544), Prologo del Traduttore, p. 37v. See also ch. 'I Gelosi'. The theory of imitation in the Prologue' of this thesis.

Ahi quãto temerari; et indiscreti si possono chiamar coloro, i quali impetuosamente danno sentẽtia finale sopra a fatti altrui, essendo il parere humano instabile, e fallace; e la fama, e lo honore degli huomini piũ, che oro, e gemme, cari, e pretiosi.<sup>37</sup>

The only clues to the identity of these probably unmentionable 'alcuni' and 'costoro' is in the Prologo itself, but this does not help to determine their names:

Et quanto fuori del convenevole ẽ alle volte creduto ogni cosa a ciascuno, che a noi si mostri coperto della pelle della pecora, comunque esso affermi, o neghi, o danni che che sia.<sup>38</sup>

As no conclusion as to their identity has been reached, several hypotheses are offered, supported by evidence which makes them plausible.

The first suggestion is that the opponents of the theatre, who in 1545 were making 'tanto rumore',<sup>39</sup> and wanted comedy to be banned from existence, were not anticipators of the mood of the Counter-Reformation, but avid followers of those doctrines of the Reformation that likewise denigrated theatre and entertainments as easy occasions for temptation and lust.<sup>40</sup> In fact among the words that Gabiani seems to quote from his anonymous adversaries, there is a reference to a direct reading of

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37. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid. The Council of Trent opened in that year, but it did not immediately concern itself with theatre censorship, see Taviani, pp. xxviii, xxxi n., 1.

40. The Reformation presented two attitudes towards the theatre: one was as severe towards it as the Counter-Reformation, one saw in the theatre an excellent instrument of propaganda for the new ideas.

the Sacred Scriptures which one is tempted to recognise as belonging to the Protestant creed:

Ove hanno trovato costoro, che dalla Comedia si appari piu mal, che bene? Che sia proibita? Che ella debba essere odiosa al Christiano? Noi vorremmo ben intendere questi loro passi della Sacra Scrittura, con le spositioni di quelli.<sup>41</sup>

And the fact that the bishop, who Gabiani calls to his defence, was present at the play, strengthens this suggestion. On the other hand, it was in the August of 1545 that the General Vicar of the Diocese of Brescia published the Constitutiones et Edicta which included chapters containing decrees on entertainment and masques.<sup>42</sup>

These orders not only refer specifically to comedies, but also to entertainment in general. Furthermore, they too link the history of the theatre to the struggle against the diffusion of the ideas of the Reformation, in which the Serenissima was involved with its towns of the Terraferma, referring ultimately to the critical relations between the Churches of Rome and Venice for the control of the diocese. The theatre itself barely touches on these highly complex and sophisticated political problems. However, the spirit and the intentions with which the Constitutiones et Edicta were issued helps to give a perspective to the attitude of the church and perhaps of the municipal authority towards it.

They are an important document because they were more specific and severe than the famous edicts issued by Cardinal Carlo Borromeo for the diocese of Milan only thirty years later, which are considered 'uno dei

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41. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo (my italics).

42. No other edicts have been found in Brescia in the Archivio Arcivescovile in the Atti of the bishops Paolo Zane (1518-31), A.Grosonio (1539-43), Francesco Corner (1532-43), buste without number, nor in the Decreti vescovili, Repertorio varie (1471-1769).



primi esempi di trattazione esauriente dell'argomento spettacolo negli ambienti ecclesiastici dopo il Concilio'.<sup>43</sup>

In those crucial years Venice had maintained Venetian nobles as bishops in Brescia. The Cardinal Francesco Cornaro (1531-1542) and his nephew Andrea Cornaro who succeeded at his death (1543), though only taking possession of his diocese in 1546 and withdrawing again after the solemn entrance, both came from Venice. Their weak action had incurred the criticism of the Roman authorities who had put pressure on Venice for a more severe action against heresy.<sup>44</sup> Following these pressures, it is probable that the two Vicari Generali, who substituted for the absent bishops, distinguished themselves by their severe measures against heresy. With Annibale Grisoni (1540-1545),

incominciava con lui il periodo più acuto della lotta contro l'eresia e della repressione del libertinaggio [...] anzi si può dire che egli abbia iniziato a Brescia la sua carriera di Inquisitore e la sua fama di 'martello degli eretici',<sup>45</sup>

and Gianpietro Ferretti (1545-46) opened his mandate with the previously mentioned publication of the Constitutiones et edicta observanda in sancta

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43. Taviani, pp. lxxvi-vi. Episodes in which the theatre is involved in the conflict between the lay and the religious power increased towards the end of the century in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation. In Brescia in 1582 the bishop Giovanni Delfino decreed that no comedians could perform and no comedies could take place on Sunday and Friday 'maneggiandosi anche presso la Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia per levarle del tutto', G.B.Castiglione, Sentimenti di S. Carlo Borromeo intorno agli spettacoli (Bergamo, 1759), p. 122. In Milan the 1579 was a year of acute crises between the Cardinal Borromeo and the Spanish Governor of Milan: for details of this documented use of the theatre, see Taviani, p. lxxvi and n., 37.

44. Paschini, Venezia e l'inquisizione romana, pp. 41-4 and p. 48 quoted above.

45. Guerrini, 'Le condizioni religiose di Brescia', pp. 86-7.

brixiensis et eius tota diocesi.<sup>46</sup> The main concern of these decrees is with the moral and religious propriety of the clergy in particular, but also rules on the behaviour of all those living in fear of God, demonstrating the classical conflict between the religious and the civil spheres of interest.

Entertainment and dancing were prohibited to everyone, though especially to the clergy:

Inhibemus omnibus, et singulis clericis, sacerdotibus, et ecclesiarum rectoribus ne publice, aliove qualicunque modo in domibus suis, vel etiam aliorum chartis, aleis, ludisve se immisceant prohibitis, neque ad choreas vadant, aut tripudiis saltent, sed neque assistant: neque sonis et cantilenis;<sup>47</sup>

while acting and masques<sup>48</sup> were prohibited to the widest possible range of religious orders in the chapter 'Contra personatos':

Omnibus sacerdotibus, e clericis beneficiatis, vel in sacris ordinibus constitutis, seu aliis ecclesiasticis quibuscunque personis inhibemus, eisque, e eorum cuilibet districte praecipiendo mandamus in virtute sanctae obedientiae [...] ne se personatos, trãsvestitos, mimos, histriones, aut ioculatores faciant in quocunque loco, aut coram qualicunque persona.<sup>49</sup>

Other chapters prohibited entertainments in schools<sup>50</sup> though only later

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46. (Brescia, 1545), hereafter Constitutiones et edicta. Guerrini promised a publication of documents on the severity of the two Vicari, but the work was never published.

47. 'De ludis, et choreis', in Constitutiones et edicta, ch. VIII, pages are unnumbered.

48. Masques were traditionally associated with the theatre and regarded with the same suspicious eye by the civil and religious authorities. The first saw in them a constant danger of public trouble. The second regarded them as sinful as masques because 'effigiem Dei odumbrant.' Just to quote one example: the famous edict by the Council of Ten, 29 December 1508 listed 'comédie et representationes, comedias in q.bus per personatos sive mascheratos,' Venice, the State Archives, Consiglio dei Dieci, Misti, R.32.f.55v. See also Taviani, pp. xxxii-xxxiii. For a decree against the sacre rappresentazioni in the 15th century, see D'Ancona, I, pp. 343-4.

49. 'Contra personatos', in Constitutiones et edicta, ch. IX.

50. 'De societatibus et computationibus et ludis in eis non faciendis', in Constitutiones et edicta, ch. XV.

was a stronger control on school programmes implemented.<sup>51</sup>

As the performance of I Gelosi was staged whilst these documents were being prepared and as either Ferretti or Grisoni attended the play,<sup>52</sup> approving of it and allowing Gabiani to put up his defence by appealing to their authority, it is therefore feasible that either the performance gained permission by making the well-known distinction between comedies 'honeste' and 'lascivie', for which the Prologo makes such a claim,<sup>53</sup> or that the demand to ban comedy came from one of the religious orders which later on in Brescia became highly vocal in the dispute about the theatre.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps it was for this reason that in the Prologo to his play, Gabiani appealed both to the religious and civil authorities of the town, and to the Venetian Rettori,

o pure si fanno essi a credere, che questi tanti Magnifici Consiglieri, i Clarissimi Signor Rettori, et il Reverendiss. Vescovo si sarebbero così scordati di se medesimi, e de gli uffici loro, che non ci vietassero la presente Comedia, se elle tutte fossero abbominevoli, come essi le fanno?<sup>55</sup>

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51. On the Costituzioni sinodali issued by the bishop about school programmes in 1575, see Paolo Guerrini, Scuole e maestri bresciani del Cinquecento (Brescia, 1922), pp. 84 ff. About school programmes, see also Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 15, fascicolo A/2, sotto-fascicolo 9, MSS.
52. The year 1545 is omitted from the Catalogus chronologicus omnium episcoporum brixienis a nativitate Domini, Venice, Museo Civico Correr, Cicogna, 595.8 (1046.8).
53. This distinction was made by the Venetian Council of Ten in the previously mentioned decree against comedies, 16 February 1530, Sanuto, LII, p. 583.
54. A 'religioso' took the defence of Brescian comedians and published Apologia a favore delle recite teatrali. The book was forbidden but kept on circulating. The Brescian bishop pleaded the help of Cardinal Borromeo because the 'religioso' had returned to Brescia, promoted Prior and comedies were flourishing; for this episode, see the letters in Castiglione, pp. 122-3 and n., I. Perhaps in answer to the Apologia, a Brescian theologian, probably Pierre Giustinelli, published a book called Antidoto contro le compagnie cattive, parlar dishonesto, comedie, rappresentationi e libri poco honesti; the edition available is dated Vicenza, 1611, but there was an earlier one in 1608 in Milan and Modena per Giulian Caffiani, see Cozzando, p. 297.
55. Prologo (my italics).

The specific indication that these were the authorities capable of granting permission to stage plays, links us back to the Provvisione Comunale. Through this document it is possible to follow the legal devices which allowed favourable or hostile attitudes towards the theatre to find a bureaucratic form of expression.

The procedure laid down by this Provvisione shows that a formal request stating the reason for staging the play had to be addressed to the Consiglio Comunale of the town. This procedure was certainly compulsory where a request for public money was involved, as a document in Asola suggests:

Il 30 ottobre si pagano £.60 ai sonatori per aver sonado in servizio del Pr pa & Ce pel Natale e Carnevale passato. E questo in esecuzione alle PP in Provvisioni in Consiglio C.11 ottobre, 1528 che è: 'si approva la spesa fatta di 60 Lire ai suonatori cremonesi a condizione che in seguito gli [illegible] di Asola non faranno spese senza speciale licenza del Consiglio e se in simili casi spenderanno denaro, sieno tenuto al pagar del loro'.<sup>56</sup>

If it was obligatory to present an application for each play, this could be the basic difference between Venice and at least one other town of the Terraferma: in Venice the Compagnie della Calza needed only the approval of their statute, which was given either by the Provveditori Comunali or by the Council of Ten.<sup>57</sup> This difference might help explain the ineffectiveness of the Venetian decrees, as well as the reason for the lack of public performances in Brescia.

Furthermore, the Provvisione seems to indicate that from 1530 a more select committee would be left to adjudicate play performances.

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56. Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 15, fascicolo A/2, busta xv.

57. Muraro, p. 85, n.,1.

In fact the sentence 'committatur et ex nunc comissum sit' seems to indicate an innovation in the procedure. According to the old one, the deciding body was the Consiglio Comunale. With this new decree the power was delegated to a smaller body, the Deputati Pubblici. This is an interesting reform since this body was also made responsible for devising and implementing the sumptuary laws.<sup>58</sup>

But the ultimate judgement was legally in the hands of the Rettori of Venice, for both sumptuary laws<sup>59</sup> and the licence of comedies. A series of notes in Ludovico Caravaggi's chronicle and some ducali from the Senate to the Rettori show the process of the law. On the 16th of March, Caravaggi noted that the municipal council took the 'provisioni sopra li pompi banchetti et altri cosi e li mandarono a far confermare alla signoria'.<sup>60</sup> In May 1554 he recorded 'si fu publicati li Capitoli et parti et provisioni in materia di pompe e banchetti, con la conferma di Venezia al nome di Dio'.<sup>61</sup> For comedies, no similar document has been found, not even in Bergamo, the other Lombard province under Venice,<sup>62</sup> and the only specific reference to the Rettori's official task of legislating on the theatre is Gabiani's Prologo, and the

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58. Cassa, p. 126.

59. Ibid.

60. Caravaggi, f. 152v.

61. Ibid. For another 'conferma', see 'Conferma delle Parti e Capitoli, approvati dal Consiglio Generale di Brescia, circa le pompe e la foggia del vestire', Brescia, the State Archives, Cancelleria Prefettizia Inferiore 1553-1558, Ducale 12 May 1554, f. 25ff.

62. Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica, Raccolta di Ducali, Sala I Loggia 253, B.5-17, MSS, and Cancelleria del Capitano di Bergamo, Rubrica dei registri ducali, Y.7.19, MSS.

Provvisione of 1530. This is probably because in the years around the middle of the century it was likely that, for comedies, the decision of the local Rettori was sufficient.<sup>63</sup> In fact the three authorities mentioned as responsible for the sanction of the academy Compagnia del Ridotto are the Bishop, the Rettori and the Magistrati Deputati of the town.<sup>64</sup> Certainly only in later years, the authorisation had to be confirmed or directly approved by Venice itself.<sup>65</sup>

What is almost certain is that, of the many prohibitions issued by the Venetian authorities in Venice throughout the sixteenth century against the theatre, none legally extended to the Terraferma. None of these prohibitions, issued by the Consiglio de Pregadi,<sup>66</sup> the Council of Ten,<sup>67</sup> the Provveditori alle Pompe,<sup>68</sup> or the Magistero della Sanità<sup>69</sup> - depending on the reason for the order - (it is not until the seventeenth century that decrees appear specifically charging the performance of masques and other forms of theatre activity as the responsibility of the

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63. Brescia, Queriniana, Provvisione, 19 January 1530, C VII 532, MS. Neither in the State Archives of Brescia, nor in the State Archives of Venice has the approval of the rejected request been found. Perhaps tighter dispositions were given in the decrees issued by the Rettori in 1557, mentioned without further details in the description of the private and inaccessible Archivio Martinengo Villagana, see Bonelli, L'Archivio Martinengo Villagana, p. 74, n.,225.
64. Statuti of the Ridotto, f. 5, see 'Lack of a Public Theatre' of this thesis.
65. In spite of the protection and the personal plea of the Duke of Mantua, the Accesi, a troupe of actors, were not allowed to play in Brescia because permission had to come from Venice, see D'Ancona, II, p. 495; and in 1582 we know from the previously quoted letter from the bishop of Venice to Carlo Borromeo that the comedians arrived in Brescia with 'molte lettere di raccomandazione agli Clarissimi Rettori', Castiglione p. 123, n.,I. But by this time (1581), comedies were also prohibited in Mantua, D'Ancona, II, p. 454.
66. 25 January 1525, Sanuto, XL, p. 752.
67. 16 February 1530, Sanuto, LII, p. 583.
68. Venice, the State Archives, Senato Terra, R.18. 8 May 1512, f,13v.
69. 27 January 1577, 'Proibizione dal Magistero della Sanità', Venice, Museo Civico Correr, Cicogna 2991 II/49, MS.

Council of Ten),<sup>70</sup> contain a reference to its application outside Venice.<sup>71</sup> Also it is doubtful whether the prohibitions against the theatre passed by the legislative bodies of Venice were automatically enforced all over the territory, as in some cases there is often a precise reference to a particular town. The motivation of the 1508 decree, starts with 'Cum Igitur à paucissimo tempore [...] appareat introductum in hac civitate',<sup>72</sup> and the same territorial description appears in a sumptuary law: the law is passed for the women 'de questa nostra città'.<sup>73</sup> Moreover in the case of a law against 'mascherati armati' there is a precise clause indicating that the law would be applied to 'ogni altra città di Terraferma'.<sup>74</sup>

The only law issued directly from Venice in connection with theatre in Brescia appeared in 1533 and concerned the Venetian Rettori in Brescia. It is included in a series of regulations relating to the excessive expenses incurred by the Rettori in the Terraferma. It is a sumptuary law for the Rettori, that is, a law issued by Venice for its own citizens only. Therefore it cannot be taken as an example of an extension of Venetian laws to the Terraferma:

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70. Venice, Museo Civico Correr, Articoli estratti dai Diarii di Marino Sanudo concernenti notizie storiche di commedie, mumarie, feste e Compagnie della Calza. Cicogna, 1650/XIV; for the years 1458-1581, see Cicogna, 2991 II/49 and also Renato Arrigoni, Notizie ed osservazioni intorno all'origine e al progresso dei teatri e delle rappresentazioni teatrali in Venezia e nelle città principali dei paesi veneti (Venice, 1840) p. 9; Gino Damerini, 'I teatri dei poveri, per la commedia del primo Cinquecento veneziano,' in Il Dramma, 36, nuova serie No. 282, March 1969. Luigi Costantino Borghi, La polizia sugli spettacoli nella Repubblica Veneta (Venice, 1898). pp. 8-11.

71. Borghi, pp. 209 and 337.

72. Venice, the State Archives, Consiglio dei Dieci, Misti, R.32, 29 December 1508, f.55v.

73. Venice, the State Archives, Senato Terra, R.18, 8 May 1512, f.13v.

74. Venice, Museo Civico Correr, Decreto dei Dieci contro li mascherati armati, 8 January 1585, Cicogna, 2991 II/49, MS (my italics).

et in essa cità [Padova] et ogni altra alcuno capitano, condutier, soldato o forestiero di che condizion esser se vogli, nè possino sì nel entrar come nel tempo starano in rezimento far far giostre, comedie, in alcuna altra sorte spese sue proprie. 75

And it seems that at least outside Venice, laws concerning the theatre were observed for some time, since there are no records of comedy performances in the Broletto in Brescia for some years.

In the light of these records and of the previous chapter, the role played by Venice regarding the theatre in Brescia seems to have been double-edged. Flexibly coercive in their responsibility for all cultural activities, neither Venice nor the Rettori intervened directly to prohibit comedies or any other theatrical activities; and the scarcity of documentary evidence leaves open to speculation the question as to how rigidly they imposed a general control over the performances, and how deliberately they enforced the exclusive use of the Broletto. At the same time, the hospitality they offered in their palace may be an indication of the backing given by the Rettori to supporters of the Brescian theatre in their effort to overcome the opposition of the local church and the local authorities. The overall result was that, in spite of the limitations and restrictions they may have imposed, the Rettori were still the most important channels through which the productions of the major Renaissance centres entered Brescia and the teatro Veneto penetrated the Lombard parts of the Dominio.

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75. Sanuto, LVIII, pp. 523-4, (my italics); it is quoted extensively also by Brunelli, p. 30; for the economic reasons inspiring this law, see Brian Pullan, 'Occupations and Investments of the Venetian Nobility', in Renaissance Venice (pp. 379-408), pp. 396-7.



## Appendix I

Libertas data Dominis Deputatis publicis procurandi quod non fiat hastiludium nec Comedia in Civitate Brixie.

Intellecto per quosdam iuvenes civitatis nostre procurari quod quoddam hastiludium fiat in ipsa civitate nostra et quedam Comedia representitur in signum letitie optatissime pacis nobis a Summo redemptore nostro mediante et ineffabili sapientia Illustrissimi Domini nostri concesse; et cum satis palam sit talia impresentiarum agi non debere cum satis constet civitatem ipsam nostram ob diversos gravesque bellorum pretoritorum turbines et tumultus satis exhaustam et multum aere alieno gravatam ac tot tantaque maxima onera perpessam ut vix exprimi possit, cumque esset talibus operibus divina ira potius provocetur quamque placetur, ac esset compertum sit pestem tam in civitate nostra eiusque territorio ac in locis civitatibus et terris finitimis debachari quod quantum discriminis afferre posset neminem latet.

Idcirco vadit pars quae committatur et ex nunc comissum sit et esse intelligatur Dominis Deputatis publicis comparenti tam coram Clarissimo Domino Capitano et vice potestate nostro qui abili si et ubi opus fuerit ad procurandum quod tale hastiludium et Comedie non fiaat.[sic]. Et quicquid per predictos Domino Deputatos vel per eorum maiorem partem factum comissum et deliberatum fuerit circa premissa ita valeat ac teneat ac si per praesens consilium factum comissum et deliberatum fuisset et capta est de balottis septuaginta octo affirmativis et viginti una negativis.

Part II

THE LITERARY BACKGROUND

Literary Records of Comedies

The impression that the Renaissance theatre in Brescia was the product of an élite is confirmed by the biographical details of the known playwrights, and the analysis of the known comedies. Thus this second part will describe the scholarly reputation of Terence and Plautus at the beginning of the sixteenth century in Brescia as evidence of the classical background which formed the Brescian comic dramatists. It will also mention the group of mid-century comedies, including those lost, as proof that those extant are not isolated efforts, but part of that unsuspected interest in comedies which the records about comedy performances have revealed. Finally it will present the rare biographical details on Gabiani, Turco and Fenarolo, to show that they were all gentiluomini diletianti who wrote comedies as a literary pastime, and in accordance with rules which their audience would both enjoy and be able to appreciate.

All the authors we know of, Gian Andrea Ugoni, Vincenzo Gabiani, Nicolò Secco, Bongianni Grattarolo, Agostino Gallo and Ludovico Fenarolo, were members of local noble families. They came from the same humanistic background which moulded the courtly poets such as Veronica Gambara and Iacopo Bonfadio, who are perhaps the best known Brescian Renaissance poets. They can be considered pupils of the late fifteenth early sixteenth century solid Brescian background of humanistic scholars whose research in classical studies produced important works on Plautus and Terence, encouraged several editions of their works in addition to commentaries on individual plays, and resulted in a number of humanistic plays which unfortunately are now lost.

The humanistic background of Brescia can boast of Joannes Calphurnius, professor of classical studies at Venice and Padua and

one of the most important early commentators on Terence. His commentary on Heautontimorumenos appeared in 1476, but its influence continued well into the following century because his work was regularly included as a supplement to Donatus's commentary to the numerous editions of Terence's plays printed in 1500, to the point of being frequently integrated and confused with that of Donatus's.<sup>1</sup> Calphurnius was not an isolated case.

Joannes Britannicus, who was both editor and printer, was one of the very few commentators on Terence during the first half of the Cinquecento in Italy. In his Ars Poetica (Venice, 1520) he discussed Donatus's commentary on Terence,<sup>2</sup> edited an edition of Terence's works in 1487,<sup>3</sup> and another in 1522.<sup>4</sup> An edition was subsequently published in 1555.<sup>5</sup>

Works of Terence were also printed at the turn of the century by

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1. For biblio-biographical references, see Mario Emilio Cosenza, Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and of the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy 1300-1800 (2nd edition, 6 vols, Boston, 1962-67), I. For the importance of his Terentian commentary in the sixteenth century, see T.W.Baldwin, William Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure (Urbana, 1963), pp. 103-6 and 120; T.M.Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana, 1964), p. 3; Storia di Brescia, V, ad vocem.
  2. See B.Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (2 vols, Chicago, 1961), I, pp92 ff.; Baldwin, p. 142. On the family, see Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, edited by the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana founded by Giovanni Treccani (18 vols, Rome, 1960-76), 14 (1972) pp. 339-44.
  3. Terenti Vita, Aelii Donati [...] Sex P. Terentii, [with the text edited by J.Britannicus] 1487, per magistrum Andream de Paltascichis Catarensem, see the Catalogue of the British Library, London, IB. 21915.
  4. Commentarii di Terenzio (Lugduni, 1522). This edition is mentioned by Peroni, IV, pp. 197- 8, and by Cozzando, p. 106.
  5. Terence, Comoediae sex, Brixiae, ex officina Damiani Turlini, 1555.

various printers. The first editions appeared in 1474<sup>6</sup> and in 1485,<sup>7</sup> this latter being printed by the famous Britannici, a family of scholars and printers. Terence's works continued to appear until the middle of the century; one edition in 1526 printed by the Paganini in Toscolano on Lake Garda,<sup>8</sup> and two editions by the Britannici in 1536.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the usual scarcity of documentary evidence, that available does show how this strong tradition of interest in Terence

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6. 'Terentii, Comoediae, in folio 'senz' anno, luogo e stampatore. Edizione bellissima delle sei comedie di Terenzio [...]. Si può con probabile certezza asserire essere uscita dai torchi o di Eustachio Gallo, o di Enrico da Colonia, i quali stamparono qui in Brescia negli anni 1474 1475 1478', see Germano Gussago, Memorie storico-critiche sulla tipografia bresciana (Brescia, 1911) p. 117. Luigi Lechi, Della tipografia bresciana del secolo decimoquinto (Brescia, 1854).
  7. 'Terentii Aphrii, Comoedie, cum Aelii Donati, et Jo. Calderini interpretatione. Impressum Brixiae per Jacob. Britannicum 1485 in folio', see Gussago, p. 86; see also Luigi Lechi, p. 37.
  8. 'Publ. Terentii Afri, Comoediae in sua metra restitutae. Interpretantib. Ael. Donato. Tusculani apud Benacum. In aedib. Alex Paganini MDXXVI', see Luigi Lechi, p. 105. See also Ugo Baroncelli, La stampa nella riviera bresciana (Brescia, 1964), p. 116.
  9. Terence, Comoedias, una cum scholiis ex Donati, Asperi, et Cornuti Commentariis decerptis [...] Jo Calphurnius Brixienis [...] studio et opera Des Erasmi Roterodami ... Addita sunt post Erasminam Castigationem ... Joannis Rivii [...] Brixiae. Apud Lodvicum Britannicum. Anno MDXXXVI. (There is one copy of this edition in the Civic Library in Bergamo, Loggia, 32, K.4, 11 4/ II60. Terence, Comoediae. Apud Ludovicum Britannicum. Anno MDXXXVI con Argumenta Philippi Melachtonis in P. Terentii Comoedias. Rivius Castigatione ex Terentio apud Lodovicum Britannicum. Anno MDXXXVI. A copy of this work is in Queriniana, according to Carlo Pasero, Le xilografie dei libri bresciani (Brescia, 1928), pp. 149-50. Brescia was one of the first towns to have a flourishing press and Brescian printers, headed by Francesco Asolano, set up subsidiaries all over Italy and extended their contacts particularly with France, Pasero, Le xilografie, p. 29. Gussago, pp. 15-20. Ettore Bertazzoni, 'La stampa a Brescia e suo territorio dal 1501 al 1536', (unpublished thesis, University of Padua, 1963). There are no studies of the Brescian Annali Tipografici after the thirties and this may account for the sudden interruption of information. Only collaterally relevant to this work is Ugo Vaglia, 'I Da Sabbio. Stampatori in Brescia', Commentarii dell'Ateneo di Brescia, 1973 (74), pp. 59-87.

seems to continue throughout the Cinquecento in Brescia. In 1526 a performance of Terence's Eunuchus is recorded at the Palazzo del Capitano,<sup>10</sup> and works of Terence were kept in the libraries of Academies and in the private libraries of the nobility: in the remains of the library of the Averoldi,<sup>11</sup> there is a list of books for the family library before 1487, and another between 1529 and 1538. These are interesting documents, providing an insight into the reading habits of a family at that time. Amongst works of law, theology, and philosophy, there are contemporary best-sellers such as 'Orlando', and Castiglione and works of Terence which were bought in the Quattrocento,

'Terentio cum comento',

'Terentio in bono Charta',<sup>12</sup>

and continued to be bought in the following century. In fact new acquisitions were made in 1534 and 1535:

'Un Terrentio legato cum comenti, compro',

'Uno terrentio picholo, compro'.<sup>13</sup>

A note at the end of the list indicates that these books were also used as text books by private family tutors.<sup>14</sup> Although there is no other

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10. See ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis. This interest is not out-dated. Terence was performed in Venice in 1526 and in Ferrara in 1543; a play by Plautus and the Maenechmi were performed in Venice in 1521 and 1543 respectively, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, V, p. 178 and IX, p. 1537.

11. Almost no records are left of the Averoldi library, as they were destroyed during the 1914 war, see Paolo Guerrini, La biblioteca privata degli Averoldi di Brescia nel Cinquecento (Milan, 1934), extract from Archivio Storico Lombardo, year LXI, fascicoli I-II.

12. Guerrini, La Biblioteca privata, p. 4.

13. Ibid.

14. 'Adi 7 agosto 1487 hano el maestro de casa virgilio cum comento de proba', *ibid.*, p. 4.

direct evidence on the use of Terence in schools and no record of plays in performance,<sup>15</sup> an edition of Terence in 1497, preserved in the incunaboli of the Queriniana in Brescia, presents an interesting first page. It is a representation of a lesson in a class. On the high chair is carved a theatrical mask and, beneath it, the orator with laurel wreath bearing the name of Terence. Around the high chair three scholars with the names of Donatus, Calphurnius and Guidoni are writing, surrounded by students taking notes.<sup>16</sup>

Plautus seems to have been studied rather less than Terence, although Brescian humanism can claim one of the most well-known Renaissance editions of his works: the commentary on Plautus's works by the Brescian scholar Pylades Buccardus. The work, left unfinished by Buccardus, was completed and edited by Joannes Britannicus in Brescia in 1506,<sup>17</sup> and reprinted in 1518.<sup>18</sup>

The intense scholarly interest in the two Roman playwrights may have been accompanied by a more creative attitude in the theatre,

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15. On the local schools, see Cocchetti, Del movimento intellettuale, pp. 78 ff. Guerrini, Scuole e maestri bresciani del Cinquecento, pp. 30 ff. For Asola, there are interesting documents in Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 15, fascicolo A/2, sottofascicolo 9.
  16. Terentius cum tribus commentis videlicet Donati Guidonis Calphurnii (1497), Brescia, Queriniana, Incunaboli E. II.
  17. Angelo Maria Querini, Specimen variae litteraturae (Brescia, 1739) p. 19; Baldwin, p. 148.
  18. Marci Actii Plauti ... comoediae ... cum comentariis Pyladis brixiani (1518), Catalogue British Library London. Robert Weiss, 'Umanisti benacensi del Quattrocento', in Il Lago di Garda. Storia di una comunità lacuale. Atti del Congresso internazionale promosso dall'Ateneo di Salò, II, pp. 200, n., 100-2.

resulting in the composition of a number of comedies. As they are unfortunately all lost, it is only guesswork as to whether they were imitations of the humanist Latin drama which flourished in the Quattrocento, particularly in Venice,<sup>19</sup> or whether they were among the first examples of the Renaissance erudite comedy in volgare.

The author of one group is Calphurnius himself, according to the generally reliable Brescian seventeenth century work by Leonardo Cozzando. In his Libreria bresciana Cozzando attributes to Calphurnius, not only the well-known works but also 'alcune Comedie facetissime'.<sup>20</sup>

The remaining comedies are written by Quintiano Stoa. He too was a scholar of cosmopolitan fame. Tutor to the French King Francois I, Rector of the University of Paris, and Reader of letters in Pavia (1510-1520), he nonetheless kept his contacts with Brescia.<sup>21</sup> His tragedies have survived while his comedies have been lost. Evidence of the actual existence of these comedies is stronger than that for those of Calphurnius. There even appears to be the evidence of Stoa himself:

Molte opere publicai; molte più ancora ne pubblicherò.  
Non si stamparono più di 6000 versi miei? non fui visto  
comporre mille ottocento versi in un sol giorno? quante  
tragedie, commedie e satire, concepite nella mia testa,  
fan ressa per isbucarne? 22

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19. Stauble, pp. 209-11.

20. Cozzando, p. 107.

21. Paolo Guerrini, 'Giuseppe Nember. Uomini illustri di Quinzano d'Oglio. Note bio-bibliografiche', Memorie Storiche della Diocesi di Brescia, 1934, serie V (pp. 67-140) p. 117. See also Storia di Brescia, V, index, ad vocem.

22. Cocchetti, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia p. 148. Comedies are recorded by Rossi, p. 222.

Other sources indicate that his comedies, still in manuscript form, were lost at the time of the battle of Pavia, and that the titles were Lesbia, Cerauni, Sorores, and Consobrini.<sup>23</sup> If these comedies were written, this would show a continuation of interest in the theatre from the humanistic world of Calphurnius to the mid-century playwrights.

Very few biographical details have been found of these later dramatists. Moreover, apart from the three authors whose comedies will be analysed, the details given here on their lives are only those that may shed light on the cultural background of the comedies. Because of the scarcity of records and the loss of most of the comedies, it is impossible to draw a full picture. The most that can be achieved is a faded tapestry on which only certain details of a few figures and traces of an occasional pattern can be detected. But the aim here is not biographical coverage, only an attempt to discover what the writing of comedy meant to these letterati; whether comedies were written as a youthful pastime, as an exercise to while away the hours of seclusion in the villa, as the obligatory literary contribution to one's academy, or as an interlude during many and difficult impegni ufficiali.

The earliest comedies are probably the two plays attributed to Gian Andrea Ugoni or Ugone. The only details known about them are their titles, La Carestia and I Baccanali. As early as 1620, the Brescian Ottavio Rossi lamented their disappearance.<sup>24</sup> Their date of composition is uncertain too. They could be works of the first half of the

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23. Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne (52 vols, Paris, 1823-28), 36 (1823), p. 454.

24. Rossi, p. 329. The same information is given, perhaps on the authority of Rossi, by the Brescian Cozzando, p. 160; Garuffi Malatesta, p. 211.



century as Leonardo Cozzando suggests, by placing Ugoni's death as 1540. But Garuffi mentions him as a member of the Salodian Accademia degli Unanimi whose earliest date of foundation is recorded as 1545.<sup>25</sup> He undoubtedly belonged to one of the noble families of the Bresciano,<sup>26</sup> and his life was devoted to,

le pratiche di tutta la nobiltà, a cui serviva in  
què tempi virtuosi e beati, nelle occasioni delle  
veglie, e delle giostre, e di quegli altri trattenimenti,  
che sono hora infelicamente sotto alle ceneri della  
nostra memoria.<sup>27</sup>

These literary exercises included the translation, now lost, of some books of the Aeneid,<sup>28</sup> and certain poems,<sup>29</sup> which, with the lost comedy, may have been the requisite contribution to his academy in Salò. A more attractive supposition is that he may have belonged to one of those heretical literary circles whose strength in Brescia has already been mentioned, and that his comedies may have disappeared so quickly because their content met disapproval. According to Pio Paschini in fact, one Gianandrea Ugoni gave refuge to the heretic Baldassare Altieri in 1550<sup>30</sup> and in his poems there is 'qualche sincero

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25. He is quoted by Maylender, IV, p. 383.

26. Paolo Guerrini, 'Il libro d'oro della nobiltà bresciana nel Cinquecento' Rivista del Collegio Araldico, June 1919, pp. 321 ff.

27. Rossi, p. 329.

28. See above, n., 24. Angelo Solerti cautiously accepts the information from Rossi that Torquato Tasso read and praised Ugoni's translation, Vita di Torquato Tasso (2 vols, Turin-Rome, 1895), I, p. 546.

29. A list of the poems and the edited collections is printed by Brunati, Dizionario degli uomini illustri della Riviera di Salò p. 144. There is another poem in Bongianini Grattarolo, p. 77. See also Storia di Brescia II, p. 522. In none of his poems are there indications about his two plays.

30. Paschini, 'Publio Francesco Spinola "Un umanista disgraziato nel Cinquecento"', p. 119. It is also worthwhile remembering that according to Paschini, the Ugoni were among those families who were conspicuous sympathisers of Calvinism, p. 119.

accento religioso'.<sup>31</sup> However, this frail thread ends here since his name appears in no other document relating to his family.

Another lost comedy is 'una piacevolissima commedia intorno alla Natura malvaggia de' villani',<sup>32</sup> by Agostino Gallo, who is also the author of 'a supercilious remark on comedies as a feminine pastime'.<sup>33</sup> Details of his life are not scarce. Born in 1499, he died in 1570. He too belonged to a noble family and was a member of an academy, the Occulti. His major work, in which he wrote 'dell' agricoltura, e de' piaceri della villa con tanta felicità',<sup>34</sup> reached an extraordinary number of editions. One was even in French.<sup>35</sup> According to Rossi, he wrote the play in the last year of his life, so it is possible that the work was either his offering as its most distinguished member to his academy, or the product of one of those hours of leisure and peace in the villa, which he described in such glowing terms.

A more professional letterato was Bongianni Grattarolo da Salò. Author of four tragedies, Altea, Astianatte, Polissena, and Argeste (lost),<sup>36</sup> and of a work on Salò,<sup>37</sup> the commission to write the comedy

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31. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 522.

32. Rossi, p. 287; Cozzando, p. 21; Vincenzo Peroni, Biblioteca bresciana (3 vols, Brescia, 1816-23; vol. 4 is MS)II, pp. 88-9; Cocchetti mentions Gallo but not his play, Storia di Brescia e sua provincia, p. 140.

33. Le venti giornate, p. 346.

34. Rossi, p. 286.

35. Le dieci giornate della vera agricoltura e piaceri della villa (Venice, 1566), later expanded into Le venti giornate dell'agricoltura et de' piaceri della villa (Venice 1566, 1569, 1572, 1575; Turin 1579, 1580; Venice 1584, 1607, 1622, 1628; Bergamo 1775; it was translated by Francois de Belle-forest, Paris, 1571).

36. Only their dates of publication are known, Venice 1556, Venice 1581, Venice 1589. For a commentary on his tragedies and biographical references, see Vaglia, Della tragedia bresciana, pp. 5-13. Ferdinando Neri, La tragedia italiana del Cinquecento (Florence, 1904) pp. 96-7. M. T. Herrick, Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance (Urbana, 1965), pp. 158, 202; Ferruccio Zaniboni, 'Bongianni Gratarolo [sic] da Salò, poeta tragico del secolo XVI', Commentarii dell'Ateneo di Brescia per l'anno 1900, 1900, pp. 68-98.

37. Historia della Riviera di Salò (Brescia, 1599).

Castruccia or Castrucca<sup>38</sup> by the Provveditore of Salò suggests that his status and local reputation was that of a 'courtly poet'.

Nicolò Secco, by far the most outstanding Brescian playwright, could also be described as a 'courtly' writer. But the courts in which he moved were different, and Nicolò Secco, both for his plays and his personality, emerges as the central figure of the Renaissance theatre in Brescia. However, as was pointed out in the introductory chapter, the literary complexity of his four plays and the prospect of researching further into his life provide the scope for another thesis, devoted to him alone:

Poeta, commediografo, matematico, artista, uomo politico e d'armi di non piccolo merito. Appartenente alla schiera di quegli uomini completi, dotati, cioè, di quella larghezza di coltura, di quell' eclettismo di cognizioni e versatilità d'ingegno che sono caratteristiche [...] del Rinascimento.<sup>39</sup>

He was born in Montichiari, and belonged to the aristocracy of the province: the Secco family was related to the Estensi, the Gonzaga, the Visconti, the Malaspini and the Piccolomini.<sup>40</sup> Endowed with an active political intelligence, which he utilized in the course of several official missions, he held key public office as is documented in detail in the two major articles written about him by Antonio Capuani and Maria Benedetti. These two authors follow Secco's two most important roles

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38. Perhaps it was never printed; no source mentions it apart from Grattarolo himself, p. 46.

39. Antonio Capuani, 'Nicolò Secco poeta, commediografo, uomo d'armi e di toga del sec. XVI', Bollettino della Civica Biblioteca di Bergamo, 1925, fascicolo II, p. 45.

40. A centre in the Brescian plain near Milan and Mantua. Fermo Secco d'Aragona, Storia di Caravaggio e Isola Fuchera (Brescia, 1968), p. 215. Alessandro Monti della Corte, Le famiglie del patriziato bresciano (Brescia, 1960) pp. 73 and 136.

in public life,<sup>41</sup> his period in Trent (1541-1545) as secretary to the powerful bishop Cristoforo Madruzzo at the time when the Principato Vescovile was at its height, and the years spent in Milan as Capitano di Giustizia. They also follow Secco's diplomatic career in the service of the Empire, in Brussels (1544), at Worms on a diplomatic visit to the Emperor Charles V (1545) and at Constantinople on a mission to Solimano I on behalf of King Ferdinand. His participation as counsellor to the Conclave on the death of Paul III (1549-1550) and his inevitable sporadic periods of decline in prestige between 1550 and 1555, are also recorded with care, but it is frustrating that those periods of his life during which his comedies were written and staged are still obscure.

As his comedies were not printed until years after they were written, further research is required to associate them with Secco's years of goliardia in Bologna during his university career in the '30s,<sup>42</sup> or to discover whether all of them, like his best-known play Gl'Inganni, were produced for the entertainment of the attendant suite of important political figures,<sup>43</sup> or merely as the product of one of those moments of solitude in his country house in Caravaggio which he praised so much in his poems;<sup>44</sup> or an elaboration of his rime burlesche.<sup>45</sup> This would

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41. Maria Benedetti, 'Un segretario di Cristoforo Madruzzo (Nicolò Secco)', Archivio Veneto Tridentino, III, 1923, pp. 203-209; for Capuani, see above n., 39.

42. He was a doctor in letters and law, Rossi, p. 320.

43. There are discrepancies about the date of the first performance of this play. The frontispiece of the extant editions carry the year 1547; Caravaggi in his chronicle indicates the 19th of December 1548, f.69; the sixteenth-century documents in the State Archives of Milan reprinted by Saxl indicate 1548, pp. 46-7. Tiraboschi mentions 1547, XII, tome VII, p. 1254.

44. Benedetti, p. 208.

45. Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna located the rime in the Marciana library in Venice, Delle iscrizioni veneziane (6 vols, Venice, 1824-53), VI, p. 684.

also help to date the three other plays, L'Interesse, La Cameriera, and Il Beffa, and thus help place them more accurately within the whole range of Italian comedy. It would also help in evaluating the spirit of Florentine comedy, which appears to pervade these plays while it is absent from the three other Brescian plays, perhaps in the light of the recorded connections with the comic tradition of Florence. Finally it would support the impression of a carefully devised structural development, relating them to similarly structured plays such as Gl'Ingannati in Italy and Laelia<sup>46</sup> and Shakespeare's Twelfth Night in England.<sup>47</sup>

However, despite these gaps in our knowledge of Secco, the two works by Capuani and Benedetti prove that the contacts with Brescia throughout his life were very close and his visits to the town frequent. Apart from living there until he was summoned to Trent by Bishop Madruzzo, he was held in the constant high esteem of the Brescian authorities. Not only did they require his political opinion but also his advice on architectural matters<sup>48</sup> and above all they valued his plays which were performed in the Broletto.<sup>49</sup>

Contrary to the surprising statement in the Storia di Brescia, his comedies are not 'ignote',<sup>50</sup> though certainly they have not received the interest they deserve from critics who have restricted their comments

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46. Laelia was acted at Queen's College, Cambridge, on March 1595. First printed with introduction and notes by G.C.Moore Smith (Cambridge, 1910), the author is unknown.

47. Baldwin, p. 365.

48. His opinion was required for the construction of the Loggia, Capuani, p. 64.

49. For further contacts with Brescia and the performance of his plays there see ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis.

50. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 527 n.,5.

to a few words of praise or of censure of the bawdy scenes.<sup>51</sup> They were certainly enjoyed and appreciated in the sixteenth century. As Secco died most likely about 1560,<sup>52</sup> it is obvious that even the earliest dates of publication of the comedies are some time after they were written, but even the editions we know of are sufficient to indicate that the plays were appreciated. Gl'Inganni, performed around 1549,<sup>53</sup> was printed in 1562 in Florence by I Giunti, and reprinted twice in 1565 in Venice by F. Rampazetto. It was also printed in Venice, in 1566, by Lucio Spineda, in 1587 by D. Cavalcalupo, in 1600 by Daniel Biscaccio, in 1602 by Domenico Imberti, in 1616 by Gherardo Imberti and in 1627 (no publisher mentioned). L'Interesse must have been written before Gl'Inganni as there is a reference to it in the prologue, though the first publication is not until 1581 in Venice, printed by Francesco Ziletti, followed by other editions in Venice in 1587 by the Fratelli Zoppini, and in 1628 by Giambattista Combi. Il Beffa was printed in 1584 in Parma by the heirs of Seith Viotto. La Cameriera was published in 1583 by Cornelio Arrivabene, in 1587 by the Fratelli Zoppini, in 1597 by Bartolomeo Carampello and in 1606 by Alessandro De Vecchi. They were all printers of Venice.<sup>54</sup> The plays certainly captured the attention of foreign dramatists. Pierre de Larivey translated Gl'Inganni

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51. Apollonio, II, p. 183. Ireneo Sanesi, La commedia. (2 vols, Milan 1935), I, pp. 59 ff. M. T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana-London, 1966, 2nd edition), pp. 126-130. For works of the past centuries mentioning the plays, see Capuani, fascicolo III, pp. 95 ff.

52. Benedetti, p. 229.

53. See n., 43 of this chapter.

54. In some editions the author's name is only indicated by N.S.: Achille Mango, La commedia in lingua nel Cinquecento. Bibliografia critica, with an introduction by Vito Pandolfi (Milan, 1966), pp. 173-4, 207-8, 219-20, 221-2.

under the title of Les Tromperies. From the same play Lope de Rueda derived his Engañados<sup>55</sup> and Molière his Le Dépit Amoureux and Shakespeare may even have used it as a source for Twelfth Night.<sup>56</sup>

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55. Capuani has also made brief comparisons between the foreign adaptations and their model, fascicolo III, pp. 122 ff.; for a short appreciation, see also Herrick, Italian Comedy, p. 237.

56. Herrick, Italian Comedy, p. 225.

Vincenzo Gabiani

An even more sheltered, uneventful and provincial life than those of Ugoni, Grattarolo and Gallo was led by Vincenzo Gabiani, the author of the earliest surviving comedy, I Gelosi (1545):

Vincenzo Gabbiano per goder' la quiete del suo cuore, e la tranquillità dell'animo suo, visse assai solingo, e fu nimico delle discordie civili, e delle risse, conformato in tutto, e per tutto al saggio documento di Cesare: 'Quid viro bono, et quieto, et bono civi magis convenit, quam abesse à civilibus discordis?' La sua pratica fu dolce con le muse, et giuliva, senza cure, e pensieri noiosi. Abbiamo saggio della sua penna presso il Ruscelli.<sup>1</sup>

This is the only information about his life given by the stock seventeenth century sources, which again do not indicate original records.<sup>2</sup>

Gabiani's position of gentiluomo was a somewhat recent acquisition.

His ancestors Giovanni Antonio and Francesco da Gabiano, who applied for and obtained the citizenship of Brescia on 13th September, 1441,<sup>3</sup> were, according to Paolo Guerrini, a family of casari who made a fortune rapidly and changed their name from 'Manenti' to 'Gabbiani' and 'de Gabiano' on becoming Brescian citizens.<sup>4</sup> The only sixteenth-century document found relating to him is his autograph in the Statuti

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1. Cozzando, p. 299.

2. Peroni closely paraphrases Cozzando, adding that Gabiani derives from 'Gabbiano', a little town near Brescia, II, p. 74.

3. Brescia, Queriniana, Archivio Territoriale ex - Veneto, Cives creati ab anno 1421 usque 1551, B.153, MSS.

4. Paolo Guerrini, 'Borgo S. Giacomo', Memorie Storiche della diocesi Bresciana, 1938, serie IX, ch. III, p. 85; the name of the small town is today Borgo S. Giacomo. Guerrini places the application for Brescian citizenship in 1445, but does not give his source. No other information is traceable about him. He is not mentioned in the Polizze d'Estimo, nor in any document concerning other Gabiani recorded in the State Archives of Brescia. Nor is there evidence of contacts with the 'Gabiano', a sixteenth-century family of printers, see Corrado Marciani, 'I Gabiano, librai italo-francesi del XVI secolo', La Bibliofilia, 1972, year 74, pp. 191-213.



of the Ridotto (1564) among those of the other eighty members.<sup>5</sup>

Also, the words 'Gentilhuomo et Academico Bresciano' appear in the front page of the play, but as the first edition is dated 1551, this appellation must refer to another and earlier academic circle.

His was a life spent in organizing literary pursuits, in writing traditional sixteenth-century verse,<sup>6</sup> in composing plays for that élite of nobles which revolved round the Broletto and the Venetian authorities, as we know from the play itself: I Gelosi was dedicated to the Venetian patrician Domenico Veniero, protector of arts and artists, himself a writer of verse, who was camarlingo<sup>7</sup> for the Serenissima<sup>8</sup>; the Prologo and the Argomento were recited by Vincenzo Metello, a Brescian poet,<sup>9</sup> in front of the Rettori. A play of his was staged in the Broletto before a similar select audience in 1548, probably for a Carnival;<sup>10</sup> and probably another play was staged before I Gelosi, according to the last obscure lines of the Prologo to I Gelosi where there seems to be a reference to a comedy entitled Il Talento:

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5. See ch. 'Lack of a Public Theatre' of this thesis, n., 19.

6. See ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 18.

7. A position equivalent to that of the Minister of Finance.

8. For his participation in other entertainments in Brescia see ch. 'Aristocratic Entertainment' of this thesis, n., 24; for a concise bibliography (foundation of the Venetian Academy, interest in Tasso's work) see Cosenza, IV, (1962), p. 3601; for his verses see ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 18.

9. See 'Delitiae Phoebi Vincentius ille Metellus Brixia quem genuit' in Hieronimi Bornati's poem 'Vinc. Metelli viri Eruditiss. Tumulus' in Carmina Acad. [sic] Occultorum p. 36: for his own poems, see ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 18.

10. Caravaggi, f.81v.

La ultima fatica, che a noi rimane, è di pregare voi tutti, che piacere vi debba di donarci uno di quei taciti sileti, che a simili bisogne si richieggono, facendo con esso non meno di favore a Gelosi, che già vi faceste al Talento del medesimo autore, poscia che anch'ora la presente Comedia non è per darvi minore giovamento, e diletto, se vi piacerà di attenderla, che quella già vi habbia dato.<sup>11</sup>

There is no trace of this comedy in the usual sources, and no further light on the meaning of these lines is given by the French translation of the play by Pierre de Larivey entitled Les Jaloux (1597):

Voila pourquoy, (Messieurs) il vous presente ceste comedie, telle qu'elle est: vous priant luy donner autant d'audiẽce qu'il est requis en choses semblables, Et en recompense, les jaloux vous donneront autãt de plaisir, qu'ils ont de martel en teste.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand the lines in the Prologo are accepted by Salvator Bongi as reference to another comedy in his work Annali di Gabriel Giolito De Ferrari,<sup>13</sup> and by Achille Mango in his catalogue, La commedia in lingua nel Cinquecento,<sup>14</sup> and Gabiani himself hints at 'usato mio costume' in his dedicatory letter to I Gelosi.

The popularity of I Gelosi was not confined to the close circle of Brescia, and though it may surprise modern scholars, this comedy, which is always referred to as a mere imitation of Terence, went into several editions before falling into almost total oblivion.

Five years after its first performance, it was printed in Venice by Gabriel Giolito De Ferrari (1551), though there might have been

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11. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Prologo.

12. Pierre de Larivey, Les Jaloux in Les comedies facecieuses (Rouen, 1611), p. 427.

13. (2 vols, Rome, 1890-95), II, p. 331.

14. Op. cit., pp. 153-4.

an earlier edition in 1550;<sup>15</sup> there was <sup>an</sup>not <sup>an</sup>edition <sup>in</sup>1557,<sup>16</sup> and ~~the~~ next to appear is that of 1560, again by the Giolito De Ferrari. This was followed by one in 1606 also in Venice, by Alessandro Vecchi. In 1597 Pierre de Larivey translated it into French, and inserted it into his collection of translations of Italian comedies which also went into several editions.<sup>17</sup>

Copies of I Gelosi are also traced in private libraries; the 1551 and 1560 editions are recorded in the private library of Tommaseo Farsetti.<sup>18</sup>

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15. Testimony of an edition in 1550 is recorded in an edition of Pierre de Larivey, Les Jaloux; the editor says he has compared his new edition with an edition of I Gelosi, 1550, see 'Introduction' to Ancien théâtre françois, edited by M. Viollet le Duc (10 vols, Paris, 1854-57, reprint Nendeln-Liechtenstein, 1972), V, p. xix. Bongi suggests that this is not the first edition because the dedicatory letter to Domenico Veniero, 5 May 1545 seems to hint at a printed work to be read, p. 331. For a suspected previous edition, see also Francesco Flamini, Il Cinquecento, a volume of the Storia letteraria d'Italia by several authors (Milan, 1898-1902), p. 557.
  16. This edition is not mentioned in any catalogue except the Catalogue général des livres imprimés de la bibliothèque nationale (Paris, 1929), LVI, mark Yd4496, but the date is a misprint, the edition with this number is that of 1551.
  17. (Rouen, 1579), (Lyons, 1597), (Rouen, 1611).
  18. Tommaseo Farsetti, Catalogo di commedie italiane (Venice, 1776), p. 115.

Carlo Turco

The search for further details about Carlo Turco's life has been more rewarding. However, the only information on the performance of his play Agnella remains its Prologo, and the letter from Lelio Gavardo printed with the play.<sup>1</sup> Also the facts discovered about Turco which could prove whether Agnella was a youthful first essay in writing plays or the accomplishment of a malizioso middle aged man, are very difficult to piece together.

The local histories of Asola portray Turco as a figure very similar to Gabiani, living the same sheltered life devoted to arts and letters, linked with the native literary cenacle.<sup>2</sup> The major evidence towards this picture was probably created by Lelio Gavardo's letter printed in front of Agnella, mentioned above, by another letter by Lelio Gavardo addressed to Sig. Sforza Pallavicino, printed in front of both editions of the tragedy by Carlo Turco Calestri and by the eulogistic poems dedicated to him by his contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> But Carlo Turco was not a solitary scholar cut off from affairs. Though of a lesser stature he is more comparable to Nicolò Secco; he actively participated in the government of his town as Deputato Oratore and

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1. The letter is addressed to Nicolò Manassi and is dated Asola, I February 1585. See also ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia', n.,37 and 'Academies', n.,34-9 of this thesis.
  2. Bernoni, Ragguardevoli asolani, p. 29; Bernoni, Le vicende di Asola, p. 160; Diario per quest'anno 1790 ad uso della città e diocesi di Asola, author unknown, presso Domenico Rompeati (Venice, undated), p. 36.
  3. 'Antonio Beffa Negrini Asolano', a poem printed with both extant editions of the tragedy by Carlo Turco, Calestri (Aldine edition, 1585 and Trevigi, 1603); see also the poem 'Canzone in Morte del'ecc. sig. dottor Carlo Turchi Asolano', printed with the same tragedy, and the poem 'Il Sepolto' by Lodovico Federici, in Rime degli Accademici Occulti (Brescia, 1568), p. 84.

Avvocato della Comunità<sup>4</sup> and the speeches he made in Venice in defence of Asola, generally in opposition to Brescia, are testimony of a vigorous outspoken style, as the following quotation testifies:

[...] non pensandomi che alcuno giudice del mondo fosse così sfacciato [...] ingiusto come è stato il podestà di Asola.<sup>5</sup>

According to these documents, the period of his major activity and pre-eminence seems to be around the 70's,<sup>6</sup> but certainly Turco was already the Avvocato in the Consiglio during the 50's, when the comedy was performed, according to the Provvisone del Consiglio Comunale.<sup>7</sup> However none of these documents helps in establishing his age at the time the comedy was written, though he had to be at

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4. The Avvocato was elected by the Consiglio Comunale, at least after the reform of 1572, and his task was that of 'contraddittore' of the proposals brought in front of the Consiglio, see Consiglio d'Asola. Riforma 1572 (Venice, 1587), p. 6v.
  5. From a letter sent to the 'Molto Magnifici miei Signori Oss.mi', 6 October 1572, Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 21, fascicolo 10, MS.
  6. See other letters in Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 20, fascicolo I; Asola, the Municipal Archives, Copie di atti vari riguardanti la comunità di Asola dal 1426-1698, vol. 69, ff. 45, 50, undated; vol. 67, f. 201 (26 July 1572), f. 213 (2 August 1575); Brescia, the State Archives, Archivio Territoriale ex-Veneto, Asola. Scritture Varie dal 1544 in poi, B.14, N.88, cartella 14, ff. 23-23v. (12 June 1572), ff. 24-25 (14 June 1572), f. 26 (16 June 1572).
  7. Asola, the Municipal Archives, Registro Provisioni dal 29-6-1550 al 18-12-1552, vol. 11, MSS, the pagination is unnumbered: his name is clearly legible in an almost illegible document dated 1550; it appears again in the 'Renovatio consilij', 1551, and on a provvisone on the 29th June 1551 signed D. Dominus Carolus Turchus advocattus; his name disappears in 1552.

least eighteen in order to sit in the Consiglio.<sup>8</sup> No information about his university life has been found,<sup>9</sup> and though his family was one of the most prominent in the town at the time, the family tree has not been drawn up again.<sup>10</sup>

But what is more disappointing is that no description has been found of the visit of those distinguished French personalities for whom the comedy was written, but the event, even some years afterwards, was still vivid in Lelio Gavardo's imagination:

Quella Agnella Comedia del Signor Carlo Turco Asolano, con tanto fausto recitata in Asola l'Anno M.D.L. nella venuta de gli Illustrissimi Principi Francesi il Duca di Nemurs, il Duca di Boglione, Marescial di quel Regno, Mons. di Bonivetto, il Conte della Rosciafocaut, e altri Illustrissimi Signori Francesi: con gran concorso ancora di gentil'huomini, e Cavalieri principali delle Città vicine, Brescia, Cremona, Mantova, e Verona, sì per la venuta di tanti Heroi, come per lo nome dell'Auttoe, nobilissimo ingegno, amato da molti Principi d'Italia, caro a molti Principi forestieri, come ben si poteva all'hora conoscere vedendosi tanta nobiltà di Francia in un tempo ad honorar le case d'esso Sig. Carlo, e de i duoi Capitani fratelli Lodovico, e Egidio, iquali mostrarono, quanto sapevano, e erano atti ad accettar Principi. Questi nobilissimi gentil'huomini, oltra il magnifico apparato della prefente

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8. Bruna Malcisi, 'Gli Statuti di Asola (sec. XV)' (unpublished dissertation, University of Brescia, 1969-70, 2 vols.), I, p. 27; the already mentioned reform in 1572 will bring the minimum age to 25, see Consiglio d'Asola. Riforma 1572, p. 3. It is interesting to notice that in order to be a member of the Consiglio it was necessary to belong to a family which had not been in business in the last forty years, Bernoni, Le vicende di Asola, p. 154.
  9. No trace of his doctorate has been found in Venice, the State Archives, Indice alfabetico dei lettori nello studio di Padova ed in Venezia (sec. XV-XVIII), N.348; or in Inventario di Riformatori di Padova (sec. XVI-XVIII), N.347; or in Indice Generale Inquisitori di Stato (XV-XVIII) N.197, which registered the important forestieri staying in Venice.
  10. The family died out in 1884 with Carletto (a local beggar); there is no record in Asola, the Parish Archives, faldone 'Famiglie' N.25, and the Liber Matrimoniorum starts in 1572, see Asola, the Parish Archives, Documenti del '500, faldone 1.

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Comedia, con grandissimo favore di silentio uditā,  
e singolar felicità di recitanti rappresentata,  
diedero sempre con bellissime inventioni gratissimi  
trattenimenti à tutti quei Principi, di maniera,  
che ancora ne vive, honoratissima memoria.<sup>11</sup>

This background is fascinating as it is so strikingly different from the dull, unimaginative, provincial life of Asola today. It presents the evocation of a refined and cosmopolitan man of letters writing comedies, which were performed in a Renaissance centre whose cultural links with Venice and the major Italian and European cities were maintained by the travels of its men of action and letters, who would keep strong, affectionate ties with their patria, and bring or send back the latest in literary vogues, as a letter by Paolo Manuzio

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11. The letter by Lelio Gavardo Asolano to Nicolò Manassi prefaced to Agnella. One guest was probably Jacques de Savoi, Duke of Nemours, one of the most valiant generals of the French King Henry II. When he retired he dedicated himself to poetry and literary studies, Dizionario enciclopedico italiano, edited by the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani (15 vols, Rome, 1955-69) VIII, (1958), p. 291. Robert de la Mark, Duke of Bouillon, (1492-1556) fought under Henry II and reacquired his duchy, with the help of Henry II, *ibid.*, p. 436. No descriptions of this event in Asola have been found for this study, not even in Brunon and Barruol, *op. cit.* Gouffler de Bonnivet, Admiral of France at the time the French King Louis XII took Brescia (1503), was given the rich land of 'Cacciabella' near Asola. In 1523 he led the French in their attempt to recapture Milan and in 1524 he was compelled to return to France. For the legal disputes about 'Cacciabella' with Venice and Asola, see Asola, the Municipal Archives, Regesto, B <AG f. 146v; see also Storia di Brescia, II, pp. 242, n., 6, and 304-5. Charles de la Rochefoucauld was in 38 'issue des princes de la Mirandole' (a town in the county of Modena, see Bibliographie universelle, ancienne et moderne, XXXVIII, (1824), ad vocem.

to Carlo Turco himself in 1560 confirms.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the praise for Turco's poetic works previously noted, his extant literary contributions are limited. The only certain works are some poems,<sup>13</sup> and two plays, the tragedy Calestri, and the comedy Agnella. While the tragedy at least is mentioned by some authorities,<sup>14</sup> the comedy has fallen into an oblivion totally undeserved.<sup>15</sup> There are only two late editions for both plays. Calestri was written before 1560, as is evident from Paolo Manuzio's 'critical review' of it to Carlo Turco,<sup>16</sup> but the first publication

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12. The letter dated 7 May 1560 is printed with the editions of Turco's tragedy Calestri (1585 and 1603). It is reprinted in 'Lettere inedite dei Manuzi: raccolte dal dott. Antonio Ceruti', Archivio Veneto, 1881, XXI, p. 274. It is printed also in Ester Pastorello, L'Epistolario manuziano. Inventario cronologico-analitico 1483-1597 (Venice-Florence, 1957), p. 82, and Diario per quest'anno 1790 ad uso della città e diocesi di Asola, p. 36. Among the most famous ASolani were Andrea Torresani who joined Aldo Manuzio in Venice in 1501 and became 'socio e promotore dell'Aldina Tipografia', see Gussago, p. 25; see also Storia di Brescia, II, p. 500. Lelio Gavardo the literary executive of Turco became the Rector of the University of Pisa, giving further impulse to comedies, see Sforza degli Oddi, Il duello d'amore, et amicizia, with a forward by Lelio Gavardo (Venice, 1597).
  13. See Carmini nel sepolcro di Beatrice di Dorinburgo (Brescia, 1568). A poem for the death of the Emperor Charles V is mentioned in a letter by Paolo Manuzio from Venice, 12 December 1558, printed in Paolo Manuzio, Lettere volgari (Venice, 1560), pp. 155-6; the letter is reprinted by Pastorello, p. 73.
  14. Ferdinando Neri, La tragedia italiana, pp. 139-40. Kennard, I, p. 151. Herrick, Italian Tragedy in the Renaissance, pp. 195-8.
  15. The only works which list it are Allacci, p. 15. Cozzando, p. 62. Giovanni Favilli, 'Bibliografia della collana Palatina di commedie', Studi Secenteschi, III, 1962 (1963), pp. 185-224; IV, 1963 (1964), pp. 193-223; these articles are also quoted by Louise Clubb, Italian Plays (1500-1700) in the Folger Library (Florence, 1968), p. 230.
  16. The letter dated 7 May 1560 is printed with the editions of Calestri of 1585 and 1603.



available is that printed in 1585 in Venice by the Manuzio family,<sup>17</sup> while the other was in 1603, Trevigi, by Fabrizio Zanetti. Similarly Agnella was certainly performed in 1550 but its two editions are dated 1558, Trevigi (unfound) and 1585, Venice, by the Manuzio family.<sup>18</sup>

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17. The publisher is known because on the frontispiece there is the typographic symbol of the Aldine collection.
18. The 1558 edition is mentioned by Allacci, *ad vocem*, and in Diario per quest'anno 1790 which mentions 'composizioni in versi, come l'Agnella. Vide la luce in Treviso nel 1558', p. 36-7. This suggests that there could also be an edition in verse. However, though the research for this study has been extended to all the most important libraries of theatre collections in Italy and abroad, no copy has been found. Unfortunately the archives of Treviso, where perhaps even the manuscript was kept, has been seriously damaged by the war and permission to research there has been denied.

Ludovico Fenarolo

The biography of the author of the best of our three comedies, Il Sergio, that would be the most valuable to this study, is ironically the most difficult to put together. In the eighteenth-century collection of poems which contains his works 'De Imperatore Carolo V' and 'De Philippo Archinto Gub. Urbis',<sup>1</sup> he is defined as Brescian. The only other work which mentions him is the nineteenth-century book by Peroni, who defines him as 'gentiluomo, di ottimo gusto nelle belle lettere. Fioriva dopo la meta' del sec. XVI';<sup>2</sup> these words are reported by Valentini,<sup>3</sup> but in neither case is a source quoted. Allacci ignores him in the first edition of his work (1666), but Il Sergio is listed in the second edition (1775), where Fenarolo is called 'Veronese'; not one piece of evidence has been found to support this possibility.<sup>4</sup>

Though Fenaroli was one of the most outstanding and important families in Brescia and in the territory, there is no trace at all of Ludovico in any of the genealogies of the family, not even in those

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1. In Carmina illustrium poetarum italorum (11 vols, Florence, 1719-26), IV (1719) pp. 252-4. For these works, see Giovanni Casati, Dizionario degli scrittori d'Italia, dalle origini fino ai viventi (3 vols, Milan, 1925-33), III, p. 28.
  2. Peroni, II, pp. 47-8.
  3. Brescia, Queriniana, Andrea Valentini, Nuova bio-bibliografia degli scrittori bresciani (1903) MS\* DX9 f.607. The usual 17th century works by Cozzando, Ghilini, Rossi, do not mention him. Storia di Brescia accepts him as Brescian but without giving sources, II, p. 527, n.5; Luigi Piccinelli barely quotes him as among 'Letterati e Poeti', Storia della cultura bresciana (Brescia, 1917), p. 43.
  4. Allacci, p. 714. He is not listed in any 'scheda' of the catalogue in the State Archives of Verona; similarly fruitless has been research in the Civic Library in Verona and among the documents on the theatre and academic activities in the town in the 16th century.

which are privately owned.<sup>5</sup> The standard official documents of the time are of no further help except for one: this sixteenth-century document seems to have escaped other researchers on Fenarolo, and speaks of the house of a farmer in Iseo (this side of Lake Iseo is, and was, in the province of Brescia) standing on the east side of Ludovico Fenarolo's property,

Bernardino di Silvestri casa con horto in contrada  
di S.t.o. Secchi à dimani [east] Lodovico Fenarolo à  
sera strata ...<sup>6</sup>

If this was the Ludovico who wrote Il Sergio, it is possible to infer that he belonged to the noble branch of the Fenaroli of Iseo, but this still does not help in dating his life.

Of no further help is the knowledge of one Giovanni Vergi, gentiluomo, to whom the play was dedicated and who was its chief sponsor. Fenarolo himself informs us:

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5. There is no trace of his name in the following collections: Brescia, the State Archives, Schede di famiglia; Brescia, Queriniana, Polizze d'Estimo dei cittadini domiciliati in Brescia 1500-1600, E.VI.1040, MSS; Archivio Storico Civico, Indice alfabetico cittadini creati (da rurali), G.II. ante 1335, (1421-1633); Archivio Storico Civico, Cittadinanze accordate, a.1421-1550, G.II.1332. There is no trace of him either in the private collection of Prof. Fausto Lechi, or in that of the Ingegnier Luigi Fenaroli, which are the most important collections on the Fenaroli family in Brescia and province, or in the yet unpublished schedari of the Dizionario biografico degli italiani, according to information received by the editors. His name appears neither in the 'Schedario dell'Archivio Parrocchiale di Iseo', nor in the 'Atti della Vicaria di Iseo', nor in the 'Estimo del Comune' of 1511: for these documents, see Paolo Guerrini, Memorie storiche, monografia di storia bresciana, X, serie V, 1934. No trace can be found in Brescia, Archivio Arcivescovile, Atti della Vicaria di Iseo, N.97-98-99.
6. Brescia, the State Archives, Archivio Territoriale ex-Veneto da I.XXVI, fascicolo 429, unnumbered sheet. No date is on the document.

vi degnaste di procurar meco, ch'ella da questa  
felicissima Città fusse con benigno applauso ascoltata.<sup>7</sup>

But the name of Giovanni Vergi is known even less than that of  
Fenarolo, and this thwarts any attempt to discover in which town  
the play may have been performed.<sup>8</sup>

Permission to consult the only documents which may provide further  
information and even precise biographical details about Fenarolo has  
been refused. These documents, recorded in the 'Inventario' of the  
Archivio Martinengo Villagana, apparently relate a Ludovico to his noble  
brothers Fiorino and Giovan Battista. The document is dated 1521;<sup>9</sup>  
this and evidence about the brothers suggest that he may at least

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7. Fenarolo, Il Sergio, the dedicatory letter signed by the author is addressed to Giovanni Vergi.
  8. No trace can be found of this name. The editors of the Dizionario biografico degli italiani, state that the name is not listed in its records. The telephone books of the principal towns in Northern Italy do not list this name. The only family bearing this name is in Milan but they could be of no help as the father was an orphan. No further help has come from Prof. Hugo Ibsen, the expert on Italian onomatology at the University of Copenhagen. There is the possibility that Vergi was a member of the Vergeria family of Cesana, a contado near Feltre, see Relazioni dei Rettori veneti in Terraferma. Belluno, Feltre (2 vols, Milan, 1974), II, p. 368. Or he may have been a member of the French 'maison de Vergy', see André du Chesne, Histoire généalogique de la Maison de Vergy (Paris, 1625); a Jean Vergici is listed but he died young about 1520. A Giovanni Vergici is the author of a sonnet, see Il tempio dell'adivina signora donna Geronima d'Aragona (Padua, 1568), p. 65. Further information on Giovanni Vergici o Vergizzi are given by Cicogna, II, p. 182.
  9. Bonelli, L'Archivio Martinengo Villagana; 'Atti Civili sec. xvi. a. 1521. Atti dei nob. Benzoni, Boschetti, Calvi, Fenaroli', p. 63, n., 152; in the index there is a specification indicating the names of the brothers Fiorino, Giovan Battista e Lodovico, p. 101. It is private property.

have been a young man at the time.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of these early dates lies in the fact that Fenarolo himself, in the dedicatory letter to Giovanni Vergi, apologises for his play because he was very young when it was written:

che voi sapete, che io ho scritta questa Comedia  
essendo quasi fanciullo, e più tosto in poche ore,  
che in molti giorni.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover in the earliest extant edition (1562) there is an indication that the play was performed in 1558 as one of the characters says:

mo che modo del diavolo è questo del 1503. Fin adesso  
che semo del 1558. El modo è pezorao nonanta per cento  
e mi sono cusi tondo che vivo all'usanza del tre.<sup>12</sup>

There are two possibilities: either the dedicatory letter was written in 1562 and the words of apology by Fenarolo to Vergi refer to 1558, or there was an edition printed in 1558 and the words refer to earlier years, as the few dates mentioned before about the author, seem to suggest.

The date of composition of the play, the proof that it was

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10. Possessions of the two brothers are recorded in Brescia, the State Archives, Polizze d'Estimo dei Cittadini in Iseo, 'Gio Battista Fenarolo casa £150, Fiorino Fenarolo casa £165, Gio. Battista Fenarolo da Tavernola £100', the sheet is undated, but one attached to it in the same handwriting bears the date of 1515. According to Prof. Lechi, Giovan Battista was born in 1460 and was still alive in 1534, see a 'Polizza' in Prof. Lechi's archives; he was the son of Francesco Fenaroli, according to the archives of Ing. Luigi Fenaroli.

11. Fenarolo, Il Sergio, dedicatory letter to Giovanni Vergi.

12. Fenarolo, Il Sergio, II, 13. 4. 7. In the edition 1584, printed in Venetia by Ziletti the last words are different: 'e mi sono cusi tondo che niuno all'usanza del tre.'

performed in Brescia, and any other information about the audience for which it was performed would be of great value; if Il Sergio was written in 1558, it would represent the only example of extant sixteenth-century Brescian comedies to directly imitate the multilingual urban teatro veneto of Andrea Calmo and Artemio Giancarli. In other words, it would offer an example of the influence of these two playwrights spreading to the Lombard part of the Terraferma and evidence that at least in part, Brescia may have derived an artistic influence from the Venetian logistic and legislative patronage of the theatre. If the play was written one or two decades earlier, in the 30's or 40's, Il Sergio would have to be considered as one of the first examples of teatro veneto in the Renaissance, with the implication that this genre may have been generated from outside the Veneto. If this was so, and if it were possible to establish without doubt that Fenarolo was not a professional man of the theatre like Calmo and Giancarli, but an academic amatore, like all the other Brescian writers, it would strengthen the evidence that the plurilinguism of the teatro veneto had a greater scholarly foundation than has hitherto been claimed.<sup>13</sup>

Both for its historic importance in relation to the drama of the Veneto area, and for its intrinsic comic value, the total silence with which Il Sergio has been received by critics and scholars is unjustifiable, particularly because the numerous editions of the play prove<sup>14</sup> that this type of comedy was highly popular with the Renaissance public.

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13. See the literary commentary of Il Sergio, in this thesis, Part III.

14. Il Sergio, by Bolognino Zaltieri (Venice, 1562); by Bolognino Zaltieri (Venice, 1562); by Francesco Ziletti (Venice, 1584); by Francesco Ziletti (Venice, 1591), this edition has not been found, it is recorded by Peroni, II, p. 48; by Luigi Spineda (Venice, 1601). The catalogues of the Marciana Library in Venice record an edition in 1555 (Dramm. 380): the date is a misprint, it indicates the 1584 edition.

Though undoubtedly factually incomplete, the 'biographies' of these playwrights seem to present a common background. All the playwrights came from the local nobility. They belonged to a local academy where they diverted themselves with the traditional poetic exercises, and they were all amateurs. None of them has the artistic stature of a Ruzzante or an Aretino and not one of them can be considered a professional man of the theatre like Andrea Calmo or Artemio Giancarli. Their comedies were written not out of inspiration but as a literary exercise for entry in a literary competition, which, like all other aristocratic pastimes, had its own set of rules that the audience understood and appreciated. Their form of theatre might even be compared, to a certain extent, to the present day experimental theatre, except that it offered no new solutions and effects outside the conventions. Its aim was to experiment within the conventions of set models not to be innovatory.

It has been a tendency of critics to attempt to build some kind of comprehensive picture out of the 'sterminata congerie di commedie',<sup>15</sup> written at the time, by emphasising recurring common themes, and unifying threads, instead of individual characteristics. The aim of the following critical analysis is to reverse this process, and <sup>to establish</sup> the already stated belief that the discovery of individual characteristics, through individual analysis, would result not only in a more accurate and valid picture of the regional literature and drama, but would also clarify the whole complex of literary and other cultural influences of the Italian Renaissance as a whole.

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15. 'Ci troviamo nella stessa difficoltà in cui si dibatterono i critici cinquecenteschi: davanti a una sterminata congerie di commedie, l'urgenza di procedere a un catalogo suggerisce di vederle nel loro insieme; e prescindendo dalla varietà nonché dall'individualità, si cercano quei temi ricorrenti', Apollonio, II, (1940), pp. 129-30.

PART III

I GELOSI by Vincenzo Gabiani

Of the three Brescian comedies that are to be analysed, I Gelosi is the only one mentioned in histories of Renaissance theatre, but even that little which is written about the play denies its individuality. It is in fact only mentioned either as an example of the influence of the Italian Renaissance drama on the rest of Europe, because, as mentioned before, the French dramatist Pierre de Larivey translated it,<sup>1</sup> or as an example of the slavish reliance of Italian authors on Latin plays. In dismissing it as banal and unoriginal, critics have stressed the lack of imagination shown by Gabiani in the structure of the plot and blamed him for the unimaginative way in which he uses episodes from his acknowledged sources, Terence's Andria and Eunuchus:

I Gelosi [...] followed the ancient pattern more slavishly than did any of Dolce's comedies. It is a fusion of the Andria and the Eunuch of Terence: the author borrowed the love story from the first named and the braggart soldier from the second. 2

The poverty of the comedy, 'poco originale nell'invenzione' also strikes Ireneo Sanesi whose commentary on the work summarises the episodes borrowed from Terence:

Commedia fredda e fiacca [...]. Dall'Andria derivano il matrimonio che i due vecchi Filargiro e Timeo hanno stabilito di concludere fra un figlio del primo (Eromane) e una figlia del secondo (Pericallea), l'amore di Eromane per un'altra donna (la Rodietta),

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1. Herrick, Italian Comedy, p. 222. D'Ancona, II, p. 171 n., 1; G.E. Duckworth, The Nature of Roman Comedy. A Study in Popular Entertainment (Princeton, 1952), p. 405; Casati, III, p. 111. Flamini, p. 315. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss Larivey's translation.
  2. Herrick, Italian Comedy, p. 116.



a cagion della quale egli si dispera quando suo padre gli annunzia il proprio disegno, e la finale conclusion delle nozze fra Pericallea e Filerote che, a differenza del suo amico Eromane, era ardentemente innamorato di questa fanciulla. Dall'Eunuchus provengono i rapporti di Eromane con la cortigiana Rodietta e col soldato spaccamontagne Zeladelfo, che non è, però come il terenziano Trasone, amante della cortigiana ma fratello di lei.<sup>3</sup>

However, these same heavy borrowings, admitted by Gabiani himself in the Prologo to the play, may be used as a critical instrument to discover and appraise the criteria followed by Gabiani in his work of contaminatio from the two Latin plays.

Imitation was not a synonym for plagiarism in the sixteenth century. It had no derogatory implications. On the contrary it was considered one of the fundamentals of rhetoric and one of the basic canons of literary criticism.<sup>4</sup>

Gabiani did not cobble scenes, episodes and characters at random. He displays accuracy and artistry in his choice, showing that he highly valued the art of imitation. His carefully selective technique indicates that he was aiming at writing a comedy according to specific dramatic theories and that he had a preference for one kind of vis comica which he pursued through careful choice.

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3. Sanesi, I, p. 259. Herrick, Italian Comedy, p. 116. The Enciclopedia dello spettacolo lists Gabiani directly beneath Terence, IV, p. 833. Francesco Flamini, Il Cinquecento. Storia letteraria d'Italia (Milan, 1900), p. 297.

4. Herrick, Comic Theory, pp. 19 ff. Although the book does not refer to the theatre, the literary theories on imitation in the Renaissance are presented in detail by Ferruccio Ulivi, L'imitazione nella poetica del Rinascimento (Milan, 1959).

Without claiming a revaluation of the play, a look at the similarities and differences between it and the two plays of Terence offers some insight into Gabiani's own conception of imitation, the extent and nature of it, and his use of it as a dramatic and comic instrument. At the same time this may help in understanding what Terence represented for this Brescian author, what aspects of the Terentian art he most admired, and what were the devices he valued most. Thus ultimately this analysis provides a contribution to the history of imitation as well as to the history of the influence of Terence on Renaissance theatre (as yet unwritten), although the Italian comedy is considered an offspring of Latin drama,<sup>5</sup> and it is accepted that,

Terence and the Terentian commentators furnished the principal matter for the discussion of comedy in the sixteenth century. The study of Terentian comedy in the first half of the century laid the main foundations of Renaissance theories of comedy.<sup>6</sup>

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5. The influence of Terence is hard to define: some authors imitated his works very closely; for some examples, see Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, IX, p. 832; most of the critical works which mention borrowings from Terence and to which reference will be made on specific issues, consider the major Renaissance dramatists only, see De Amicis, op. cit. G.A. Calzigna, Fino a che punto i commediografi del Rinascimento abbiano imitato Plauto e Terenzio (Capodistria, 1899). Duckworth, pp. 397 ff. For works on single authors, see Giovanni Zecca, Della influenza di Terenzio nelle commedie di Ludovico Ariosto (Milan-Rome-Naples, 1914). A list of Renaissance plays with episodes and characters from Andria and Eunuchus is provided in the Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, I, p. 833. It is beyond the scope of this work to compare Gabiani's use of Terence with that of other dramatists.
6. Herrick, Comic Theory, p. 1.

### The Theory of Imitation in the Prologue

As is the case with other Cinquecento plays,<sup>1</sup> information concerning the author's ideas about tradition, imitation and comedy can be found in the prologue to I Gelosi. It is therefore a valuable supplement to the play itself exemplifying as it does both Gabiani's theoretical and practical interpretation of the concept of imitation. The practical interpretation can be seen in the way the prologue to I Gelosi is the result of a contaminatio of the prologues to Andria and Eunuchus, as it combines their two functions; it is used by the author both to defend himself from the charges of plagiarism and to enunciate his opinion on literary topics. The theoretical interpretation is exemplified in the way the themes concern the origin and nature of imitation and consequently the nature and function of comedy and art and the relationship between imitation and the concept of authority.

It is, according to Donatus's four categories, a prologue censorius<sup>2</sup> as, in deliberate homage to Terence, it contains no argomento. Terence was proud of this innovation as he stressed in Andria:<sup>3</sup>

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1. Emilio Goggio, 'The Prologue in the "Commedie Erudite" of the Sixteenth Century', Italica, 1941, XVIII, pp. 124-32.  
Alessandro Ronconi, 'Prologhi "Plautini" e prologhi "Terenziani" nella commedia italiana del '500', in Il teatro classico italiano nel '500', pp. 197-217. De Amicis, pp. 70-8.  
Naborre Campanini, Lodovico Ariosto nei prologhi delle sue commedie (Bologna, 1891).
  2. In the tract De comoedia et tragoedia, attributed to him, Donatus distinguished four kinds of prologues: 'Prologus [...] eius species quattuor sunt; commendatitius [...] relativus [...] argumentativus [...] mistus in Terence', Comoediae Sex, edited by Nicolaus Camus (London, 1821; 1st ed. 1686), p. xxvi.
  3. For the consciousness of this novelty on the part of Renaissance Italian dramatists and their imitation of it, see Duckworth, pp. 61-62.

Lo Auttore della Comedia, per essere stato occupato in rispondere ad alcuni, parendogli di volere anchora in questa cosa Terentio imitare, non le ha preposto argomento alcuno. 4

Similarly, just as the prologues to Terence's plays were recited not by the author but by the chief actor and stage manager,<sup>5</sup> so in I Gelosi the summary of the plot was placed before the prologue and was recited by M.Vincenzo Metello, a Brescian poet of the Gabiani circle.<sup>6</sup>

The similarities are not only formal. As Terence in Andria admitted to borrowing from Menander's Perithea,<sup>7</sup> so Gabiani in the prologue defends himself against the charges of plagiarism by acknowledging his debts to Terence:

Questa Comedia, si come è di argomento doppio, parimenti dalle due prime di Terentio, Andria l'una, Eunuco l'altra chiamate, parte di suo soggetto si ha tolto. 8

From Terence too is taken the argument for the defence: the appeal to authority, the value of the high example is advocated in Heautontimorumenos:

Habet bonorum exemplum: quo exemplo sibi licere id facere quod illi fecerunt, putat, 9

and repeated in Andria itself:

Qui quum hunc accusant, Naevium, Plautum, Ennium accusant.<sup>10</sup>

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4. Gabiani, I Gelosi, Argomento. Hereafter the name of the author will be omitted.
  5. Duckworth, p. 62.
  6. See ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 18.
  7. Andria, Prologue 9-13. (Hereafter references to and quotations from Terence's works and Donatus's commentary on the plays will be from the following edition: P. Terentii, Comoedias, [...] apud Lodvicum Britannicum, Brescia, 1536).
  8. I Gelosi, Prologo.
  9. Heautontimorumenos, Prologue, .20-21. This Terentian source for the appeal to authority is pointed out also by Ronconi: 'Appellarsi ad un' autorità che non può essere discussa è terenziano', although the lines are mistakenly attributed to Andria, p. 205.
  10. Andria, Prologue, 18-19.

As Terence appealed to the authority of Plautus, Ennius and Nevius, so Gabiani defends himself behind the authority of Plautus, Terence and Ariosto, thus also showing that even the highly praised tradition acquired further value when the classical past was welded with the new contemporary forms:<sup>11</sup>

Pensavasi lo Autore, che lo andarsi con gli essempli di costoro, come con fermissimi scudi ricoprendo contro coloro, i quali lo biasimavano, perche alle volte havesse imitato alcuni poeti, bastare gli dovesse. 12

Thus here the name of Terence stands for that of authority. His name is associated with one of the various meanings of imitation in relation to art during the Renaissance:

There is the use of the term [...] as meaning imitation of the other men's work. In this sense it was both an important pedagogical principal and a critical touchstone in evaluating the work of authors ancient and contemporary. 13

This leads Gabiani to his own definition of the relationship between the old model and the new work, that is, his definition of the nature of imitation. He sees it both as a practical matter and a rhetorical issue. He compares the skill of the contaminatio to that of grafting, and the result to the new buds of a plant. The works of the Latin playwrights are, for him, the result of technical skill and, at the same time, of transfusion of life; the very essence of art:

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11. In the sixteenth century 'commediografi non solo fiorentini [...] pongono come fatto acquisito l'esempio del teatro comico dell'Ariosto a fianco e al pari di Plauto', and exemplify how 'la tradizione, la regolarità dei modelli sia sentita come un campo arricchito dal valore raggiunto dalle esperienze dei moderni in forme originali e con successi originali,' Aldo Borlenghi, Ariosto (Palermo, 1961), p. 8.

12. I Gelosi, Prologo.

13. Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Wisconsin, 1964) pp. 70-1.

'De quali quel i da Greci, e questi da Latini componimenti, quasi piu rampolli 14 spicando ad innestarli nelle loro piante, senza risparmio, si sono messi. 15

The validity of a new work of art fitted into ancient material and forms became the subject of much debate in some of the major prologues of the Renaissance dramatists.<sup>16</sup>

Another point of similarity with Terence is the use of the prologue as a means of replying to intense criticism and personal attack.<sup>17</sup> But while Terence had only to answer attacks against himself, Gabiani had to defend the very nature of comedy and, in the previous chapter on censorship in Brescia, this prologue was cited as evidence of the hostility of some groups in the town to the theatre at that time.<sup>18</sup> Although the vehemence of Gabiani's reply seems to indicate that he was pleading a genuine case, it has to be noted that it was also part of the tradition of imitation to introduce defences against anonymous enemies. The best evidence of this 'literary tradition' is the fact that Gabiani's prologue was translated *in* stronger *terms* and actually recited<sup>19</sup> in France

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14. Carlo Battisti and Giovanni Alessio, Dizionario etimologico italiano (5 vols, Florence, 1950-57), V, ad vocem: 'sorgere dal seme e farsi pianta; moltiplicare in figliolanza.'

15. I Gelosi, Prologo.

16. Ariosto, Cassaria, Prologo. Ronconi, pp. 207-10 and Goggio, pp. 322-4.

17. Eunuchus, 23-24; see also Duckworth, p. 63.

18. See ch. 'Theatrical Legislation and Censorship' in this thesis, n., 34 ff.

19. The very end of the prologue is slightly modified and announces the entrance of the actors, 'Il vous vouloit dire l'argument, mais parce qu'il a veu sortir ces deux jeunes hommes, il a pensé qu'ils vous les feront entendre, Les Jaloux, Prologue, in Ancien Théâtre François.

not only at the end of the century but also during the seventeenth century, by Pierre de Larivey, an exercise in imitation but also probably not a superfluous defence.<sup>20</sup> Hence, apart from providing an interesting insight into the polemical atmosphere of the time, the counter-attack widens the Terentian scope and the result is a fuller debate on the artistic issues.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, although very likely for good practical reasons, the prologue to I Gelosi assumes characteristics which will be typical of Renaissance prologues in the second part of the century, when they tended to abandon the 'motivi di polemica personale prevalenti nel commediografo latino,' and to introduce 'un carattere più culto di dibattito letterario e drammaturgico.'<sup>22</sup> Thus the author's self-defence becomes a defence of comedy expanding into two of the major topics of Renaissance literary criticism - the nature of art and its purpose.

Although Gabiani was concerned only with comic art, his arguments had to come to terms with the traditional Renaissance objections to poetic art on moral grounds:

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20. 'Ou ces braves Quintils ont-ils trouvés?', Les Jaloux, Prologue; "Quintil" is the 16th century word for the arrogant and reckless unqualified literary critic, Edmond Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle (7 vols, Paris, 1925-67), IV, ad vocem.
21. A long tirade against the local bigots and friars in Siena is contained in the prologue to L'Alessandro by Piccolomini, a play that Gabiani may have seen when it was performed in Brescia (see ch. Comedies Performed in Brescia, in this thesis, n., 30), but in the Sienese play the dispute is centred on whether the money could not be better spent on charity; it does not develop into theatrical definitions of the nature of comedy and art.
22. Enciclopedia dello spettacolo, VIII, p. 350. This change dates from the middle of the century as does the critical codification of the difference between the prologue 'informativo' and the prologue 'giustificativo' made by Giralaldi Cintio, in Discorso intorno al comporre delle commedie e delle tragedie (1545); see also Ronconi, pp. 197-8; yet according to Ronconi the literary debates in prologues tended to remain within 'una tematica sostanzialmente terenziana', p. 211.

Objections to the art of poetry - and to the other arts - had two main sources. The more remote, which also became the most recent, were those objections springing from the Platonic doctrine. Plato's original strictures on the nature of art - on its relationship to the truth, on its possible moral consequences [...].

The more modern objections, those raised during the Middle Ages and continued uninterruptedly into the Renaissance, were also essentially moral and religious in character. 23.

Although the violent anonymous request for a ban on comedy in Brescia to which Gabiani refers, may have been inspired by the 'antipagan and antiseccular'<sup>24</sup> ideas of the second group of objectors, Gabiani's line of defence centres on three main recognized authorities: Plato, Cicero and Horace. He turned to the first to define the origin of comedy, to the second for the content and to the third for its aim. Although Gabiani may have been aware that the ideas of these three leading lights had been interpreted both for and against comedy, he does not defend his interpretation. He simply presents it.

He realizes that not only is the aim of poetry questioned, but its nature too is a frequent subject of debate.<sup>25</sup> Therefore to the charges that comedy is 'opera immonda e diabolica'<sup>26</sup> he replies by attributing a divine origin to it, 'la Comedia laquale ha il suo principio havuto dalle cose divine'.<sup>27</sup> This is a sentence which Gabiani found in Evanthius, De tragoedia et comoedia which re-echoes one of the themes of Platonism,<sup>28</sup> although Plautus's name is not mentioned. Thus, upholding the

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23. Weinberg, II, p. 798.

24. Ibid.

25. For this argument in the Renaissance, see Weinberg, II, p. 798.

26. I Gelosi, Prologo

27. Ibid.

28. 'Initium Tragoediae et Comoediae a rebus divinis est inchoatum', from Evanthius, De tragoedia et comoedia, in Terence, Comoediae sex, edited by Nicolaus Camus.



theory of the divine origin of art, Gabiani can attack his enemies on the same issue, rebutting their charge of diabolical origin. This latter charge derives from the opposite interpretation of Platonic thought, according to which comedy was the devil's work because it derived from an image, and therefore portrayed a false idea of reality:

[L'] identificazione fra teatro e diabolico [e] frutto sempre di un unico atteggiamento di base: la visione dello spettacolo profano come organizzarsi di una falsa realtà (non di un'immagine della realtà) in un sistema coerente ma inconsistente, diabolico perché assurdo ma non privo di logica. 29

Partly as a consequence of this theory came the second charge, that the theatre was not reality, an image of truth, but something ephemeral, illusory, masked and a dissimulatio.<sup>30</sup> The second point in the defence echoes the Ciceronian definition that comedy is imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis, but Gabiani regards it only in so far as it concerns the content of comedy, and links it in with Horace's theory of the fusion of delight and usefulness:<sup>31</sup>

La comedia, laquale col contenere diversi costumi, e affetti di cose civili, e private, ne mostra ciò che utile sia alla vita, e ciò, che è da fuggire. 32

Thus Gabiani uses Donatus's fusion of the two definitions as he expressed them in the De comoedia as his own, to the point of paraphrasing him closely:

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29. Taviani, p. lxxxvi.

30. Ibid., p. lxvii.

31. Horace, De arte poetica, in Tutte le opere, edited by Enzo Cetrangolo, latin and italian text (Florence, 1968) 343.

32. I Gelosi, Prologo.

Comoedia est fabula, diversa instituta continens,  
affectuumque civilium ac privatorum, quibus discitur  
quid sit in vita utile, quid contra evitandum. 33

Also the reference to two kinds of audience, with one capable of overcoming the danger implicit in a comedy, is not a new defensive weapon. It is also an argument codified by the literary tradition of the theatre. Andrea Navagero made a distinction in his defence of Terence between the 'facetie' whose aim is only to move the 'popolazzo' and Terence's art which 'fuori di quel plauso del commosso vulgo, un lettor riposato, e con l'animo queto le pos. a approbare.'<sup>34</sup>

As these detailed examples indicate, the distinguishing feature of this prologue is a display of references to the most sacred canons of the time. These fashionable literary formulas are a repetition of the major important critical comments of the Renaissance. Gabiani does not interpret them with any originality and it will be only through a survey of the play itself that their real significance for him, and his own practical interpretation of them, will appear.

This seems to confirm that this prologue - as many others at the time - was primarily a homage to tradition, a homage to the cultivated audience who could recognize the Latin model. It seems to confirm

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33. p. xxv. It is also interesting that, according to Weinberg, the most distinctive contribution of the Brescian Terentian editor and art critic Joannes Britannicus is the 'development of a dichotomy between the parts of poems providing pleasure and utility', I, p. 93.

34. Andrea Navagero, letter to Giovanni Grolier, printed in Terentius, Aldi, Venetiis, 1517 (hereafter Aldine edition of Terence, 1517) and reprinted in L'Andria et l'Eunucho (1541).

Vincenzo De Amicis' opinion that prologues in the Renaissance were but manifestos of obedience to the Latin comedy<sup>35</sup> as well as Ronconi's suggestion that some features such as the captatio benevolentiae were introduced in the Renaissance without any practical reason but only because they were 'legate all'ambizione di richiamare a spettatori dotti il ricordo di Terenzio'.<sup>36</sup> Gabiani's whole prologue appears to have this significance. The fact that Gabiani used it to answer a real attack against the theatre - as seems to be indicated by the violent tone and the direct appeal to the present current authorities - does not contradict this theory. On the contrary, it confirms that ideas stimulated by actual circumstances were most popular if embedded in the most traditional forms.

The impression is thus that Gabiani, in bowing to one of the most highly valued concepts - imitation - satisfied the literary snobbery of the public and also gave himself the opportunity of enjoying a literary exercise: an exercise in imitation.

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35. De Amicis, p. 70. Calzigna, pp. 10-14. Bucchioni, p. 182. His survey is confined to the Tuscan authors.

36. Ronconi, p. 200.

### Imitation of the Structure

An audience intellectually prepared to appreciate the literary subtleties of the art of imitation as displayed in the Prologue, was certainly ready to follow and enjoy the skilled jig-saw work exhibited in I Gelosi.<sup>1</sup> The structural accuracy with which Gabiani amalgamated the two plots of Andria and Eunuchus with episodes of his own invention, shows that he was not trying to hide his sources, but, on the contrary, that he was proud of his ability to merge the various elements of the two plots. The Renaissance highly admired the technique of contaminatio and the Andria in particular was regarded by critics as the play where Terence was best able to make 'ex multis Comoediis unam'.<sup>2</sup> Renaissance opinion is well synthesized in the letter from Andrea Navagero to Giovanni Grolier which prefaced the Aldine edition of Terence in 1517 and which was reprinted verbatim in the translation of Andria and Eunuchus in 1544, previously mentioned:

Così tutte le parti in Terentio sono ligate insieme,  
così unite, così di tutte si fa una certa cosa sola:  
che niuna altra si potria fare più à filo, ne più ben  
raccolta, e misurata delle Comedie di lui. 3

The existence of the argument is confirmed by Anton Grazzini, 'Il Lasca' in La Gelosia, where he lashed at the contaminatio, as he did not see it as 'grafting' but as patching:

Traduchino in mal'hora, se non hanno invenzione,  
e non rattoppino e guastino l'altrui e il loro  
insieme. 4

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1. 'In una società' intellettualistica [...] così nella costruzione come nell'esecuzione, il commediografo si valeva di modi espressivi che servissero come termini di confronto, più che come suggestione diretta', Apollonio, II, p. 45.
  2. Donatus, 'In Prologum Andriae, interpretatio', p. 2.
  3. L'Andria et l'Eunucho, p. 2 of the letter.
  4. La Gelosia, 'Prologo agli uomini'.

While the prologue is an example of imitation as a literary cultural ornament, the play is an example of imitation of structure. I Gelosi is in fact one of the first plays, perhaps the only one in the Italian Renaissance, built on the five-act structure of the Terentian plays and the interpretation of those critics who integrate the threefold division that Donatus used to analyse the Latin comedy with the five-act divisions prescribed by Horace.<sup>5</sup>

A close comparison between the structure of the play and its two Latin models classifies I Gelosi as one of those plays which, structurally, represent the necessary intermediate step between the comedies of the first decades, typified by Ariosto,<sup>6</sup> and the production of the 1550's where 'col D'Ambra ci si trova gia in presenza d'intrecci piu complicati e sostenuti che quelli degli autori dei primi decenni' and where one notices 'un gusto per la condotta tecnica di nodi complicati'.<sup>7</sup>

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5. This interpretation of Terence's structure is given in great detail in Baldwin's book William Shakespeare's Five-Act-Structure, op.cit., and it is on his research and conclusions that this chapter is based. Other works which, in relation to Renaissance criticism, refer to Baldwin's work do not add anything further to it, as for example, Herrick, Comic Theory.
  6. As there is no study analysing in detail the development of the structural patterns of Italian comedy, this section relies on Baldwin's authority for the statement that Italian comedy had not yet a Terentian normalized structure in the first half of the 16th century, Baldwin, pp. 368 and 447 ff; the acceptance of his view is based on the most well-known comedies, and on all comedies quoted, even for different purposes, throughout this work. A comparison between I Gelosi and Il Geloso by Bentivoglio (1544-45), which Gabiani may have seen represented in the Broletto (see ch. 'Comedy Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 31), and which is omitted here because this latter play is beyond the scope of this thesis, is useful in bringing the difference into relief.
  7. Commedie del Cinquecento, edited by Aldo Borlenghi (2 vols, Milan, 1959), II, pp. 9-10.

Apart from identifying and therefore placing this comedy in the vast production of that period, a comparison between the structural form of I Gelosi and that of the two Latin plays provides grounds for suggesting that Gabiani did not know his Terence casually through the several editions which appeared in that period in Brescia and Venice,<sup>8</sup> but that his knowledge was based on a careful study of the scholia and commentaries accompanying the Latin editions: that he studied not only the traditional Donatus and Servius, on whom students of his generation were traditionally brought up, but that he was very likely thoroughly familiar with the critical theories and precepts of the German school of commentators, namely, Melanchthon, Latomus and Willichius, who, following in the steps of Erasmus's commentaries on Terence, developed his principles into a system which allowed analyses of Terence's plays in great detail and provided a method which students and playwrights could use to write new comedies.<sup>9</sup> That is to say that this play - not outstanding for its artistic value - reveals itself as a useful document in support of the hypothesis that this thesis would like to suggest, that, in some respects, Italian comedy, towards the middle of the sixteenth century, may have been influenced by the critical movements d'Olttralpe. It also offer some evidence of the role played by border provinces such as Brescia in the literary history of the period, in the light of Baldwin's statement that,

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8. For the editions of Terence which appeared in Brescia, see 'Literary Records of Comedies' in this thesis, n., 6 ff.
9. 'A significant thing to notice about Iodocus Willichius is that his interest in drama is not merely philological and archeological. He studies the old dramas that they may reveal the correct models on which contemporary dramatists should construct their new ones[...] Willichius is the first of these critics to face the problem from the point of view of the playwright', Baldwin, p. 228, see also ch. VIII.

these influences were not specifically national. Rather learning was in Latin and international. On certain fundamentals established by no single nation, all cultured nations were agreed. But each nation developed its own peculiar applications of these principles. 10

Too little is known of Gabiani's life for us to be able to establish how he might have become acquainted with the Northern theories of Terentian criticism. However some important links between Brescia and the literary critics d'Oltrelpe have been established.

First of all the edition of Terence edited in Brescia in 1536 by Ludovicus Britannicus<sup>11</sup> was prefaced by two important works of Erasmus on Terence: his notes on how to approach critically the comedies, Des. Erasmus Roterodamus De Metris, which was the basic text for the Northern school of critics, as it provided the guidelines for their structural and educational approach,<sup>12</sup> and his later (1532) letter to the Boneri brothers which also dealt with Terence. This edition alone is proof enough of the links between the Brescian world and the North as it is practically a reprint of the edition of Terence's works edited in Basle in 1532.<sup>13</sup> It is also certainly worthwhile considering that the two editions of Terence's works edited in Brescia in 1536 by Ludovicus Britannicus did not only contain the scholia of Donatus, already included in the Brescian edition of 1526,<sup>14</sup> but also included a commentary by Melancthon

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10. Baldwin, p. x.

11. See ch. 'Literary Records of Comedies' of this thesis, n., 9.

12. Baldwin, pp. 162-3.

13. Terence, Comoediae, per Hieronymum Frobenium, Nicolaum Episcopium (Basle, 1532).

14. See ch. 'Literary Records of Comedies' of this thesis, n., 8.

himself<sup>15</sup> which gives further support to Baldwin's statement that,

[...] not only in his own country was his system predominant. Either his arguments, summing up the plays according to protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe, or his side-notes, labelling the crucial scenes in terms of the system, or both together are in the majority of the texts of Terence for the remainder of the century. 16

As additional evidence of the dialogue with Northern literary circles, there is another edition printed in Venice in 1544 by Scotus D.

Amadei<sup>17</sup> that also contains Melanchthon's critical comments which may have been studied by Gabiani.

It is also important that not only was the German scholar Latomus in direct contact with Erasmus<sup>18</sup> but also the fact that Erasmus' works were spread widely throughout Brescia and among Brescian scholars, such as Emilio Maggi, and Emilio de'Migli, is well documented. 19

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15. See ch. 'Literary Records of Comedies', of this thesis n., 9.

16. Baldwin, p. 172.

17. Publii Terentii, Comoediae sex, cum interpretationibus Aelii Donati, Guidonis, Juvenalis Cenomani, Servi ad Jacobi Badii Ascensii, Necnon Jo Calphurnii Brixienensis (licet recentioris) viri apissime docti, qui quidem in Heautontimorumenon multa familiariter scripsit. Insuper scholia ex Donati, Asperi & Cornuti commentariis decerpta. Acetiam & Philippi Melanchthonis in eiusdem Terenti comedias, argumenta. Venetis Apud Octavianum Scotum. D. Amadei 1544. See Terence in bibliography.

18. For a bibliography of this relationship, see Baldwin, pp. 207 and n., 4. The influence of Northern commentators is suggested only in relation to the structure, not to any pedagogical application of Erasmus's interpretation, i.e. belief in a didactic use of characters - because as will be pointed out more specifically later, Gabiani fits into the Italian tradition whose aim was to entertain and amuse rather than to educate.

19. The Dutch philosopher commanded a following among many religious men, aristocrats and intellectuals in Brescia in the '30s. Emilio de'Migli, chancellor of Brescia, completed the translation of the Enchiridion Militis Christiani, in volgare in 1531 under the literary influence of Bembo and the direct encouragement of Erasmus. The correspondent between Erasmus and Emilio de'Migli was the Brescian scholar Vincenzo Maggi who was the author of a theoretical work on comedy - De ridiculis, 'the most elaborate discussion of the risible in the 16th century', Herrick, Comic Theory, pp. 40-53. He was also one of the most active propagators of the ideas of the Reformation in Brescia, summoned before the Sant'Ufficio (1553) because of the distribution of prohibited books, see Guerrini, 'Due amici bresciani di Erasmo'. Augustin Renaudet, Erasme et l'Italie (Geneva, 1954), p. 222. Paschini, Venezia e l'Inquisizione romana, p. 48



But, factual evidence apart, it is the structure of I Gelosi itself which allows the hypothesis that Gabiani was aware that Terence's works, which he chose to imitate, were divided according to a five-act structure scheme, that each of the five parts had been commented on and given specific structural roles and that an integration of all successive studies had culminated in the enunciation of a set of rules.<sup>20</sup>

The following survey of each act does not lead to the conclusion that I Gelosi was built in accordance with the rules of one specific commentary on Terence. What it shows is that Gabiani would not have been able to write his play with only the notes of Donatus as guide; that he was deeply interested in giving a tightly-knit unity to his play and that he achieved it because he was aware that Terence's plays were planned according to a criterion of the correlation between act-structure and story-structure which he applied more rigorously than Terence; that he composed each act of his play as clear-cut units with specifically defined functions as the 'normalization' of the Northern theories suggested;<sup>21</sup> that

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20. 'It will be noticed that Wagnerius (Willichius) has not integrated the two principal systems. At bottom is the old five-act formula as stated by Landino. This discriminates the content of each of the five acts. But he has integrated with it the triple division into protasis, epitasis and catastrophe. This triple division in turn sets up to further internal goals. The first goal is the thing toward which the protasis tends, at the end of the second act. The second is the thing toward which the epitasis tends (the highest epitasis), the occasion of the catastrophe, at the end of the fourth act. So the first and second acts form a sub-unit, as do the third and fourth. This integrated formula of Wagnerus (Willichius) gives a very definite framework indeed for constructing a play. From the integration of Wagnerius and Willichius is formed a consistent analysis by which other plays may be written upon the model of Terence, and be 'regular', Baldwin, p. 239.

21. Ibid., pp. 239-40. All the critical work of relevance was done outside Italy for the first part of the century, Baldwin, ch. XII-XIII; see also Herrick, Comic Theory, and Weinberg, op. cit.

from them he learned that the structural divisions which Donatus had stressed did not correspond to a point but to a section and that each section ended on a crucial point. Finally it shows that he probably also turned to other plays of Terence in order to find a better exemplification of the pattern he had in mind, because, in spite of the fact that he plentifully borrowed from Andria and Eunuchus, his rigid care for a close-knit structure allowed him to give his play a pattern of its own.

Because the play is far from being well-known, a summary of the plot may be useful to give a first impression of how heavily the Brescian author relied on Terence for his material.

Philargiro has arranged a marriage between his son Eromane and Timeo's daughter Pericallea. The parents are unaware that Eromane has a relationship with a courtesan called Rodietta - a woman who has recently arrived in town - and that the young man has no intention of giving her up. He has the support of Philerote, another young gentleman of 'respectable status' who in turn is in love with Pericallea. Eromane's life is complicated by the sudden arrival of Zeladelpho, a braggart soldier, who is also Rodietta's brother and is keeping a strict eye on her behaviour in the name of family honour. With the help of a servant, Dolone, the two young gentlemen plan to bring the whole affair to a point where the marriage between Eromane and Pericallea would no longer be possible: by the kidnap of the girl by Philerote and a gang of servants and friends. Eromane offers to contribute by cheating his father into believing he is willing to marry the girl of his choice on condition that he may be given time to see her and dispel rumours that she is atrociously ugly. Although the father unmasks his trick, a postponement is allowed to satisfy Eromane's curiosity. Thus time

is gained to allow the kidnap, while the two fathers unwittingly contribute to it by choosing to present the girl to the sceptical Eromane during a pilgrimage to a nearby sanctuary, the very place where the kidnap is meant to take place the following day.

Meanwhile Philerote's servant is working out his own plan so that Eromane does not change his mind and marry the girl. He arouses Rodietta's jealousy with the result that a night encounter between her and Eromane at her place is organized. The suspicious watch of Zeladelpho is to be overcome by an entrance in disguise; although there is a mishap the braggart jealous brother is cheated. Faced with the weakness and uselessness of this temporary solution, Rodietta's escape after the night of love is organized so that she takes her own as well as Zeladelpho's property in order to force him to come to an agreement. The plan against him succeeds but on their way to a safe place the two lovers and the servant are caught by Eromane's father and Dolone's shrewdness is this time betrayed by bad luck and the whole plan is uncovered, though not in time to prevent the kidnap. The tangle is unravelled when a neighbour, Pausania, arrives back from a journey to reveal that Philerote is the son of Philargiro and therefore Eromane's brother. The general happiness brought by the news induces Timeo to forgive the kidnapper and have Pericallea marry him. Also now he has two sons, as he had said during his first talk with Eromane, so he is willing to tolerate that having one married properly, the other continues to enjoy himself for the time being with Rodietta. Also Zeladelpho's fury is appeased by the prospect of regaining his possessions.

It is not surprising that a virtuoso of technique like Gabiani did not escape the widespread fascination for that theatrical vogue

which enjoyed experiments in intricate plots, interwoven actions, and complicated threads. By the middle of the century he could also benefit from the practical examples of innumerable comedies built on the most imitated and praised Terentian feature: the double plot, which Donatus held up in the Andria as an excellent example of structural interweaving<sup>22</sup> and which by the '40s had become an almost compulsory feature of Renaissance comedy in Italy.<sup>23</sup>

I Gelosi brings together the double group of characters of both Andria and Eunuchus and interrelates them in the same way as in the two originals: from the Andria he derives the interdependent love affairs of two young men whose happiness is opposed by the father of one of them and who together organize their plans to oppose him with the help of a servant. From the Eunuchus one recognizes the story of the young man, in love with the courtesan, whose happiness is opposed by a rival braggart soldier and whose story is interwoven with the stratagem of another young lover.

In Andria one young man, Pamphilus, has a more important structural role than the other, though both plots interact with that of the opposer in the course of the play. By contrast in Eunuchus both lovers' plans, which cause each to clash with the other's adversaries, are of equal structural importance and Gabiani has chosen this more close-knit inter-relation for his play.

Moreover Gabiani has also doubled the basic formula on which Terence's plays are built. The Latin plots develop from 'a struggle

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22. Donatus, in Andria V.5.977.

23. Doran, pp. 277 ff; see also Herrick, Comic Theory, pp. 106 ff.

in intrigue,<sup>24</sup> between two contenders, so that:

In five of the six plays, the plot is double, involving the struggle of two young men to procure their lovers [...]. In four of the five plays with double plots, the young men must overcome the manipulations of one father, who regularly uses or attempts to use the other father or foster father to aid him. In the fifth play, Eunuchus, the opposition comes from a rival of one of the young men. <sup>25</sup>

In I Gelosi, one of the lovers, Eromane, is from the beginning, the antagonist of both the father and the soldier, that is to say, Gabiani has combined in one play both the more traditional opposition figure of the father and the jealous character who appears in only one play by Terence. The result is that Eromane's action bifurcates in a double struggle from the beginning: against the father and against the soldier and in his battle he has an active ally in the other lover's intrigue against the father. Gabiani thus links together from the start the two groups of characters, their double problems and their ensuing double actions. He thus ventures into a structure which has not only a double plot but also a double action - a structure for which he could use only one of Terence's plays as a model.<sup>26</sup> The use of one character with two opponents as a device to tighten the unity of the threads is taken straight from Eunuchus where the braggart soldier, Thraso, achieves the same structural result by being the opponent of both young lovers and therefore linking the action of Phedria to that of Cherea (II.iii).

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24. Baldwin, p. 9; see also, Doran, p. 153.

25. Baldwin, p. 8.

26. 'In this fourth play, Eunuchus, Terence takes a still further step by not only doubling, complicating, and contrasting the plot; but also by doubling the action. For this play alone he has both the double plot and double action', Baldwin, p. 27.

But there is a difference between the Latin play and I Gelosi; in the Brescian play the situation is reversed because in Terence it is the 'enemy' Thraso who is attacked on two sides. This modification is relevant because it provides evidence of Gabiani's intention to cull out those devices which would give unity to the two plots he borrowed from Terence, and because it also indicates how closely he scrutinized each part of his Latin models and carefully assessed their functions in relation to one another.

It also suggests that Gabiani did not interpret the role of Thraso as a secondary incidental plot as Donatus and some Italian critics did, unable as they were to reconcile it with their theory of dramatic unity.<sup>27</sup> Like Melanchthon and Latomus<sup>28</sup> he interpreted it as the other complementary thread of the double action, as the motivating force of the play itself.

The first act also provides an example of how Gabiani, with one modification in slavish adherence to the content and structure of the act, gave a more accurate delimitation to the function of each act and thus more 'perfection' to the frame of his play.

The play opens with a young lover in deep distress:

Ma che viso mesto è quello, che io ti ho veduto fare,  
mentre che cō Dolone di nō so che ragionavi? [..]  
che due volte ti sono state per cadere le lacrime da  
gli occhi. 29

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27. Doran, pp. 277, 444-5 and n., 44-45.

28. For Melanchthon, 'Thraso holds the first place in this play [..]. Against Thraso is pitted Phedria; for unless Thraso had a rival he would not be imperiled in love'; this view was analyzed in 'fuller fashion' by Latomus, Baldwin, pp. 183, 211.

29. I Gelosi, I, l. 4-9.

Eromane's distress springs from two causes: his love affair with Rodietta, a courtesan, is at risk because his father has decided to marry him to an old friend's daughter, Pericallea, and because the courtesan herself, caught recently in the company of a soldier, has sent him away without an explanation. His only hopes of securing the woman despite these two interferers - the father and the soldier - depend on his faithful servant's wits:

Io non ho speranza in altro, che nelle astutie di Dolone,  
mio servo. 30

Moreover this initial impasse is entangled with the love story of another young man, a friend of his, called Philerote, who, in turn, is deeply in love with Pericallea, the girl his father is planning to give him as a wife.

The antagonism between the father and the two young men united in their struggle and decision to fight, derives straight from the first scene of the Andria. In the Latin play the old father, Simo, organizes a mock marriage between his son Pamphilo and an old friend's daughter Philumena in order to be able to break his son's secret relationship with the courtesan Glycerium and finally marry him to Philumena.<sup>31</sup> But in this he clashes with another young man, Carino, who wishes to marry the girl.

The second problem distressing the protagonist of I Gelosi - the presence of a rival - is taken from the first scene of Eunuchus which starts with a young lover Pamphilo pouring out his sorrows

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30. I Gelosi, I.1. 100-1.

31. Although in Andria the wedding is pretended, while in I Gelosi it is actually planned, the function of the two fathers' decision is identical as it represents the initial obstacle which sets in motion the dynamic force of the play.

because his favourite courtesan has been cool to him without an explanation and ends with the promise of an encounter between the two.

Gabiani has thus grouped in one single scene (I.1), the scene of the exordium, the beginnings and issues of both Terence plays, and has organized the material so as to preserve the three functions of the regular Terentian first act. He informs the audience of a) the existence of a crisis, b) the causes of the initial deadlock, and c) the yet undefined hopes for a counter-action. These were the structural characteristics pointed out by Donatus in his commentary on the first act of Andria:

Haec scena pro argumenti narratione proponitur, in qua fundamenta fabulae iucuntur: ut virtute poetae, sine officio prologi, [...] et periocham comoediae populus teneat. 32

The second part of Act I provides further evidence of the author's awareness of the above norms, of his interest in a strict application of them and of his intention to assign to each act clear-cut bounds and functions.

Its scenes (2. 3.) are closely reproduced from the equivalent second part of Act I in Eunuchus as far as the content is concerned. They develop the love-story of Rodietta and Eromane, reveal the existence of a jealous opponent, present the lovers' resolve to overcome the opposition, and, as in Terence, no stratagem is yet disclosed so as to keep the audience in suspense as Donatus had commented:

Protasis est primus actus initiumque dramatis, quo pars argumenti explicatur, pars reticetur ad populi expectationem retinendam. 33

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32. Donatus, in Andria, I.1. p. 6.

33. Donatus, De comoedia, p. xxvi.



Thus all the fundamental roles of the characters and their position in relation to one another are disclosed within Act I. On the contrary, in both Andria and Eunuchus, the presentation of the second thread of the plot is reserved for the first part of Act II when Charinus' worries (II.1) and Thraso's jealousies (II.1) are presented. Donatus himself attributed this role to these two scenes and Renaissance critics further clarified it pointing out that in Terence the protasis, that is to say the lay-out of the situation, occupied Act I and was prolonged into Act II where the protasis of the second thread was placed.<sup>34</sup>

Thus by anticipating one scene Gabiani 'improved' Terence's structure, giving his first act greater definition by incorporating both the protasis of the first and of the second story. In other words he made his first act coincide with the protasis. He also conformed to Terence's specific indication that there should be a clear separation between the 'opening of the plot' and the 'course of the action'. This was an indication that the Renaissance, following Donatus, accepted and transformed into a precise requirement.<sup>35</sup>

Up to this point Gabiani's task was certainly eased by the fact that the composition of the first act had been carefully analyzed since Donatus's time and that, following his indications, critics since the 15th century had been able to specify and define the content

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34. For the gradual clarifications on the function of these two scenes up to the final normalization of Willichius in his Commentaria, see Baldwin, 'The structural analysis of Terence by Latomus, 1534', ch. X, especially pp. 209 ff. and 'The integration by Iodocus Willichius', ch. XI, especially pp. 231 ff.

35. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

of the protasis in Terence and even the early Italian dramatists of the 16th century had correctly arranged the first act of their plays. But contemporary Italian authors and commentators did not provide him with a firm guide for the structure of the other four parts, neither in theory nor in practice, as their comedies were not written to the regular Terentian formula.<sup>36</sup> It is therefore interesting to see the process by which Gabiani selected his material from Terence and the changes he introduced so as to be able to continue according to the principles he has indicated in the first act.

As said before, while Terence protracted his protasis into the first scene of Act II, Gabiani confined the protasis to the first act. Thus automatically he made the beginning of Act II coincide with the beginning of the epitasis, that is, with the beginning of the action. In this way he emphasises that he attributes a specific function to each act; that the separation between the first two acts marks a neat division of their functions.

That this clear-cut division was not a coincidence is confirmed by the nature of the content assigned to the beginning of Act II. Its opening marks the beginning of the real action in the play and it includes the revelation of the two intrigues, that against the father and that against the jealous brother. Both actions are thus tied together from the very first. This gives the act a symmetrical parallelism with the first scene of Act I, as both are like a nucleus from which all threads depart.

As in Act I, the two plots are unified by one character. There the problems were linked by Eromane, here the tricks are linked by

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36. Baldwin, pp. 447-8.

his servant Dolone. Like the previous one, this plot is not original. It is taken from Terence. In Eunuchus a similar role is carried out by the servant Parmeno as it is he who devises the deception (II.3) which unites the stories of Cherea and Phedria, as Donatus had noted.<sup>37</sup> Gabiani reinforces the weight of this role by localizing the servant's ideas in one single scene. In Eunuchus Parmeno's plans are gradually introduced, first through the suggestion of presenting the courtesan with a eunuch (II,1) to contrast with Thraso's gift of the girl. Moreover only chance leads Parmeno to organize his plan and tie together both plots (II.3.) In I Gelosi on the contrary, both intrigues are constructed and arranged deliberately as part of the whole struggle, from the very first scene (II.1.), thus forming not a coincidental countermove but the intentional well-designed first move of the struggle.

This modification in the presentation of the intrigues is especially noticeable if compared with the rather close imitation of the actual stratagems.

The two stratagems are taken from Andria and Eunuchus; the father-son plot derives from Andria, and the soldier-lover plot derives from Eunuchus. But despite this, a look at the different disposition and correlation that they are given in I Gelosi will show that it is this that gives the Brescian play the same cohesion between the two plots and the two actions as the Latin model and yet a different and original pattern.

Dolone's idea of persuading Eromane to postpone the wedding by pretending to consent to it in order to gain time is exactly

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37. Donatus, in Eunuchus, p. 69; 'Itaque ex magna parte motoria est. Atque in hac comoedia qui personam Parmenonis actor sustinet, primas habet partes.'

that of the servant Davus in Andria (II.3.). But while in Andria the servant has no specific intention for later,<sup>38</sup> the same trick is used in I Gelosi to postpone the threat of the impending marriage in order to allow the second lover, Philerote, to perform the kidnap of the girl the following day (IV.6.) and therefore present the father with a fait accompli. The basic difference is that the trickery of the Andria has become, in I Gelosi, the first part of a two-phase plan consisting first of a manoeuvre against the father and second, after its success, the kidnap of the girl. The two parts are in this way temporally and casually interlocked because only the success of the first makes it possible for the second to take place. The two tricks are two stages of one unit. The plan in Andria was single and the expected result was single too; it was a mono-plan. Gabiani transformed it into a two-tiered plan. The subsequent countermoves in Andria, the advice to the father to organize the marriage (III.2.) and the bringing in of the child to repair the damage done by his excessive cunning (IV.3.), are spontaneous decisions determined by the turn of events and not part of a prearranged inclusive plan.

The plan against the soldier worked out contemporaneously, whilst it differs in detail, is very close to its source in its basic idea. Eromane's decision to let himself be wrapped up in a carpet and smuggled into Rodietta's house (II.1.) recalls Cherea's plan to be brought in disguised as a eunuch. (II.3.) In Terence there is only one plan but it is expected to achieve two aims: to defeat Thraso on Phedria's behalf by presenting a nicer present and

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38. Andria II.3.

to allow Cherea to enjoy his beloved.

The servant's scheme of catching two birds with one stone is eliminated in I Gelosi and is replaced by another two-phase plan which forms a symmetrical parallelism with the first concerning the father-son plot. Eromane's entrance into the house satisfies the lovers' desires but the subsequent escape of Rodietta and Eromane with the soldier's property provides the second necessary step for a more definite conclusion of their plans. Although this second step is only decided during the night encounter, as in the previous case, the two parts are temporally and casually linked so as to form two phases of the same action.

After the simultaneous end of both actions, the rest of the act can be divided into two sections. The scenes in the middle (II.2.3. 4.5.) prepare the necessary conditions which will enable the lover to enter the courtesan's house. Through the deliberately misleading report of Siro, the second lover's servant, the courtesan is led to believe that the marriage organized by the father has been agreed to be Eromane. Her jealousy aroused, she abandons the precautions that up until now had prevented her from welcoming Eromane into her house. This episode, and its subsequent effect of the speeding up of the plot against the braggart soldier, represent the necessary link between the protasis and the summa epitasis, that is, between the first and the fourth acts.

The device is once more suggested by Terence. The trick of the false information recalls the scene in Andria (II.5.) where the second lover's servant, Byrria, actually misunderstands a conversation. Genuinely believing that Pamphilo has complied with his father's will, he reports it to his master, thus contributing to the summa exitasis. As in Terence, this complication is used to interweave the two plots. In both plays it links the protagonists of the two love affairs

so that the two groups of characters who were united at the opening of the play by their problems are united again as soon as the epitasis starts in the second act. Thus the activity of one group speeds up the solution to the problems of the other.

The third part of Act II furthers the action of the plot modelled on the Andria. It is devoted to the successful performance of the first part of the deception against the father (Andria II. 3.4.5., I Celosi II.4). In the Latin play it marks the first victorious move of one part against the other,<sup>39</sup> in the Italian play the end of the second act indicates the culmination of the first phase of one of the two plans on which the comedy is built. Gabiani's determination to highlight this crucial point in the structure of the play is indicated by the fact that he puts this scene at the very end of the act. The act thus closes with a climax, whereas in the Andria the same trick is performed in the middle of the act.

The structure of the second act thus offers the first example of how for Gabiani the three structural divisions indicated by Donatus were not points in the action but sections, each of which was to aim at a climax. The result is that act two represents a transitory step (*oeconomia*) towards the epitasis (intensification) of the jealous braggart-lover plot, and represents the first part of the epitasis of<sup>40</sup> the father-son plot.

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39. Baldwin, p. 11.

40. It coincides with Latomus's commentary which located the beginning of the epitasis, 'initium ad epitasin', for Andria in II.2, see Baldwin, pp. 209-11.

The concomitance of the first deception with the climax of the action in the second act also brings into relief how Gabiani reconciled Northern structural precepts with the traditional Italian concept of comedy based on the beffa, to show, as has been said before, that his interest in entertaining prevailed <sup>over</sup> his interest in educating.

The central theme or scopus<sup>41</sup> on which each major commentator since Donatus had concentrated his attention in order to fix a guide for the various stages in the action, had been suggested by a moral attitude towards the comedies. For Melanchthon the key to the act-division was 'peril deriving from error',<sup>42</sup> for Latomus it was a 'moral'.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly the most important point in Act II was for Melanchthon as well as for Latomus the scene when the advice to cheat is accepted (II.3.). For Donatus, on the contrary, the crucial point is 'error' and <sup>the</sup> key scene is where Pamphilus foils his father (II.4.).<sup>44</sup> The Northern commentators stressed the concept of error, Gabiani that of 'foil' and made foiling the motivating force and the key to the structure of his comedy.

Act III presents a pattern analogous to that of Act II. The first part regroups the threads, summing up the position of the characters in relation to the various plans after the first advancement of the action (III.1,2.). The third scene of the act provides a link between the two poles of the epitasis for the father-son plot in the same way that the middle of Act II provided it for

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41. Baldwin, p. 207. Latomus's commentary appeared first in an edition of Terence in 1534 in Cologne.

42. Ibid., p. 182.

43. Ibid., p. 207.

44. Ibid., pp. 34 ff.

the lover-soldier plot, and its end (III.4.5.6.7.8.) coincides with the successful conclusion of the first part of the beffa against the soldier, as the second Act did with the lover-father plot. It is with this symmetrical correlation that the threads of both plots advance in a harmonious balance.

For both threads, the first two scenes are the linkage by which the beginning and the end of their respective epitasis are tied together. The courtesan's decision (III.1.) to speed up the night visit of Eromane is connected with Siro's trick to excite her jealousy (II.2.) and at the same time it is essential to prepare the ground for the second part of the plan against Zeladelpho - her elopement from her brother's house with the purloining of his property to compel him to come to terms (IV.1.). The next scene, (III.2.) with the two fathers agreeing to give time to Eromane to see the future betrothed and choosing the pilgrimage as the most suitable occasion for the young man to meet her, has the same structural function for the father-son plot. It constitutes the indispensable thread between the first deception against the father (II.4.) and the actual kidnap, which represents the culmination of the second stage of the plan against the father (IV.4.).

The last part of Act III sees the same sequence of scenes which provide a crescendo towards the completion of the first part of the beffa against the braggart soldier. Thus, as Act II ended with the accomplishment of one trick, so Act III closes on the realization of another.

An examination of the fourth and fifth acts brings into further evidence Gabiani's determination to divide the play so that each act corresponded to a clear-cut structurally defined segment of the action. The fourth act is formed by the final success of the two



second stages of the tricks and by the discovery of them both. As in Terence, Act IV of I Gelosi contains the moment when the highest hopes of success are entertained by the lovers because of the complete accomplishment of their plans and also the 'preparation to the catastrophe'<sup>45</sup> or summa epitasis,<sup>46</sup> that is, the sudden reversal of fortune which brings the setback and consequent upset of all plans. The fifth act contains the 'catastrophe' and the final solution. Once again Gabiani thus applied the division between these two last acts more strictly than Terence had done either in Andria or in Eunuchus, as the climax of the epitasis comes in the fifth acts of Andria (V.3.) and Eunuchus (V.1.).<sup>47</sup> He has put the divided action and the act exactly where Willichius, the most advanced of Northern theoreticians, had placed it in his Commentaria in 1539 after synthesising all the various theories:

Willichius clearly felt the need of a term to express the function of the fourth act, and to distinguish it from the epitasis, which he localizes to the third, and from the catastrophe, which he confines to the fifth [...]  
definitely correlating act-structure with story-structure. 48

The episodes forming this fourth clear-cut unit are the triumphant flight of Eromane and Rodietta at night from Zeladelpho's house with the complicity of the servant (IV. 1.2.3.), and Pericallea's kidnap (IV.5.6.), followed by the discovery of the deceptions by Eromane's father (IV.4.) and Zeladelpho the brother (IV.7-10.), which cause the necessary dramatic setback and throw the tricksters back into a situation worse than ever before.

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45. Willichius' definition of the fourth act, see Baldwin, p. 232.

46. Latomus's definition, *ibid.*, p. 211.

47. For example, see Latomus' analysis, *ibid.*, pp. 210-12.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

This moment in the action, although clearly a counterpart of the scene in Andria when Chremes finds out the existence of Glycerium's child (IV.3.4.) and in Euruchus of Thraso's realization that he had been twice deceived, (IV. 6-7), presents one relevant difference: the highest moment in the epitasis is not only the reversal of all expectations founded on the success of the intrigues but also the revelation of the plans to the adversaries, who, until then, had been in the dark about any opposition to their will. This difference is a consequence of an initial basic variation between the structure of I Gelosi and its two Latin models.

In both of Terence's plays the 'adversary' to the young lovers' happiness is aware of the presence of an obstacle to his will and sometimes deliberately, or sometimes with the help of chance, the action revolves around his efforts to overcome it. In I Gelosi neither the father nor the soldier, in spite of their suspicions (I.4., II. 6.), realize that there is an attempt to deceive them and they do not attempt active opposition. The various episodes in the Brescian play cannot therefore be regarded as moves and countermoves as in the two Terentian models. Rather they turn out - as has been seen - as phases of two main intrigues which are not opposed during the play, and which, only at the moment of the summa epitasis lead the protagonists into a muddle - the protagonists having proceeded through risks and overcome them up to this point.

Terence himself in Phormio and Adolphoe presented opponents unaware of any scheme against them and therefore with no plan to defend themselves. Yet for a framework constructed on a plot based on two sequential intrigues Gabiani may have looked to another play by Terence, the Heautontimorumenos or perhaps to the Pseudolus or the Miles Gloriosus of Plautus. In each of these plays the plan engineered by the servant to thwart the father or the lover is formed

of two parts organically linked and, in the case of the Heautontimorumenos, planned as a whole trick from the beginning, as in I Celosi. Furthermore in this play the first deception - the two sweethearts introduced into the house as maids - is successfully perpetrated right at the end of the second act, forming in this way a dramatic climax to the end of the act.(II.4.). Analogously the second deception - the attempted robbery of the father - culminates at the end of the third act. And the whole plan is destroyed by chance in the fourth act.

In these cases the action is one. Gabiani has doubled it, introducing two interdependent actions, and taking pain throughout the play to knit together the various parts of his action.

While in the Miles, for instance, the second part of the trick does not depend on the success of the first (the hole in the wall which allows the lover's clandestine meetings has nothing to do with the stratagem of the woman falsely in love with the braggart), in I Gelosi the first trap for the father is indispensable to the kidnap. Similarly, Rodietta's escape evolves out of the first success - Eromane's entrance in disguise, into Zeladelpho's house. The author's awareness of this structural role can even be seen in Dolone's words which could be used to reply to those critics of the Miles who saw the pretence of the woman falsely in love as redundant because it comes after the successful completion of the lovers' encounter.<sup>49</sup> Dolone, describing the double purpose of the robbery to Zeladelpho, provokes Rodietta and Eromane who are enjoying each other's company in Zeladelpho's house, by saying:

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49. Duckworth opposes this opinion with the same criterion to be found in Dolone's words, p. 183.

'se [...] vi levate a mano, a mano, con quante robbe havete, e andate in luogo, ove al dispetto del Soldato, il quale Iddio sa quando partire si voglia, quante fiate vi sia in piacere, vi possiate trovare insieme? [...] Tuttavia noi non habbiamo cio' fatto per ritenerglielo. Ma accio' che egli, non trovando cosa da cio' in casa, habbia ad andare a buscar sua vettura altrove, o rimanere qui volendo, habbia di gratia che restituite gli siano le sue robbe, senza currarsi di altro. 50

Further cohesion is given to the three parts of this soldier-lover trick by making the first contrivance the cause for the discovery of the whole prank. It is in fact thanks to the 'vestimento',<sup>51</sup> worn by Dolone in order to pretend to be a pilgrim and deceive Zeladelpho and then forgotten, that the father finds out the whole machination (IV.4.).

At first it may seem that in the fifth act there is a flaw in Gabiani's rule of assigning a specific function to each act. Zeladelpho's assault on his enemy's house is clearly a counterpart to the scene when Thraso rallies his forces against Thais in Eunuchus (IV. 6-7.), so that the summa epitasis forms the 'end' and objective' of the two plays.<sup>52</sup> But, the second father appearing on the scene raging about the kidnap of his daughter only in the fifth act (V.2.) may lead to the moving of part of the climax into Act V, as Herrick does for Andria.<sup>53</sup> However, this postponement does not place the setback in a different position in the play. On the contrary it is another example of how, as in the previous

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50. I Gelosi, IV.2. 54-.

51. *Ibid.*, IV.4. 110.

52. Baldwin, p. 395.

53. For Andria he places it when Davus is threatened to be put in chains (V.2.) and in Eunuchus when Parmeno is overwhelmed with the most tremendous threats of punishment (V.4.), Comic Theory, p. 120.

parts, the catastrophe is not a climax but a stage during which the dangers outlined at the moment of the setback, are effectively piled on the tricksters' heads, exactly as Terence does in both plays, although Gabiani perfects it by leaving the entrance of the person who will help to solve the intrigue to the fifth act too, (Andria, IV. 5 - I Gelosi, V.2).

The solution, which, as we shall see, is perhaps the most enlightened touch of the play in terms of comic effect, structurally shows more than any other part of the play a slavish contaminatio. In an effort to make the best of both worlds, the author fails to provide a fusion between the happy endings of both actions. Although for the plot he adopts the subtle and admired device from the Eunuchus, he is incapable of avoiding the accidental recognition from the Andria. Whilst Thraso is appeased by a gentleman's agreement with Phedria, by virtue of which they arrange to share the use of the beloved, Zeladelpho yields to financial blackmail and renounces his long held pretensions of defending the family honour. Just as the arrival of Crito brings about the recognition of Glycerium as a noble citizen, so the return of Pausania, Philerote's adoptive father, and the realization that he is Zeladelpho's brother induces a general atmosphere of concord and forgiveness, allows the marriage of Pericallea and Periergio as reparation for the kidnapping of the girl and, at least for the time being, generates an attitude of tolerance towards the love between Rodietta and Eromane.

The purpose of the present extensive analysis of Gabiani's theoretical and above all practical approach to the problem of imitation, much debated in the Renaissance period, was in the first instance an attempt to give I Gelosi a literary and historical

identity that would distinguish it from other countless products of its type written then, and secondly, to point out an interesting affinity with the critical theories of contemporary Northern Europe. It was also to highlight the author's awareness of the problems and importance of dramatic structure and his skill in improving this dramatic element in respect of the contemporary Italian comedy.

For such painstaking skill was not merely that of the pedantic scholar sticking to the rules for the sake of the theory of imitation. Thus the following examination of I Gelosi aims to show how the author carefully used the five act structure to obtain a specific effect, and indeed, how each modification made to his two Terentian source plays, and each technical device employed to merge them successfully, was specifically designed to achieve comic spirit based on outright laughter.

### Imitation of the Comic Spirit

The comic spirit running through I Gelosi is not that of the two plays by Terence from which most of the material is borrowed and whose pattern is so closely imitated. The 'authority' in this respect is Plautus, the humour flavouring the various parts has the richness and gaiety of his plays. In I Gelosi the emphasis is much more on fun and cheerful humour. It arouses laughter more than smiles. The adjective which summarizes the whole tone is giocososo.

Gabiani disregards not only the Andria commended 'serious vein' of Andria<sup>1</sup> but also surpasses the Eunuchus, the most Plautine in its farcical humour of all Terence comedies.<sup>2</sup> Not that Gabiani models his scenes directly on any episodes from Plautus - the similarities with one or two motifs in his plays, which will be pointed out later, were already part of the comic inheritance of the Renaissance. No, Gabiani transfuses Plautine spirit into his comedy by expanding those scenes and characters which in Terence lend themselves more easily to farcical treatment, by transforming those details which are 'out of key' with the rest of the Terentian work,<sup>3</sup> because of their robust humour. Consequently he borrows more from Eunuchus and the scenes he takes from Andria are those which can be modified into entertaining sketches, or he culls out of this play instances which may provide

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1. L. Gourde, 'Terence the Philosopher', Classical Journal (1946-7), 42, p. 432. For <sup>Terence's</sup> more refined comic spirit and language, see Navagero, letter to Grolier, in the Aldine edition of Terence (1517).
  2. Duckworth, p. 156. Croce defines it as 'molto briosa e con qualche abbondanza dell'elemento comico qua e là farsesco che è manchevole o scarsissimo nell'altre', 'Terenzio', in Poesia antica e moderna (Bari, 1943), p. 29.
  3. G. Norwood, Plautus and Terence (New York, 1932), p. 152.

irony and wit. He definitely omits the serious and pathetic.

He is certainly neither an innovator nor a creator of new comic techniques. His range of devices is limited. His ability consists mainly in enlarging those 'items' and characters which have the stronger comic force in Terence's plays and in introducing a swift pace which allows no pause between sketches, so that the result is a sort of cumulative method.

The richness is in the degree, not the variety. The most constant tone is gaiety and mirth, with some spells of light irony from Andria and some ruefulness in the parts from Eunuchus. Although 'Plautine', his humour is never vulgar or slapstick. The laughter is aroused either by mocking the jealousy and the bragging of Zeladelfo, or at the capriciousness of the lovers. Only rarely does it become caricature.

Terence's desire for a more refined humour led him to drop those elements which in Plautus's hands were productive of robust entertainment.<sup>4</sup> Gabiani works in the opposite direction and in order to obtain a richer comic spirit introduces 'Plautine' modifications in those parts of I Gelosi which can be considered extracts from Terence.

Sometimes he eliminates all traces of seriousness and enriches the scene with a gentle wit by means of a few slight changes.

The first quarrel between the two lovers because of the first attempt of the young man to find out the reasons for the courtesan's coldness, is in some parts almost a translation of its equivalent scene in Eunuchus (Eun.I.2., I Gel. I.2). The beginning is identical.

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4. Duckworth, p. 321.



Similar are the courtesan's fears that her previous cold reception has offended Eromane,

Thaide            Meschina me, Io dubito che Phedria  
Nonhabbia havuto a male per non essere  
Hieri lasciato entrare in casa: e habbilo  
Preso a qualch'altro verso, che noi il fessimo.<sup>5</sup>

Rodietta        Misera me, io temo, che Eromane  
nonhabbia havuto a male la vista,  
che l'altr'hieri gli feci, o altramente,  
che io non ho fatto, la si habbia interpretata.<sup>6</sup>

Similar too is the reaction of the young lover on seeing her, although Eromane's symptoms are different and remind us that love has passed through the theories of the Dolce Stil Novo,

Pamphilo        Parmeno i tremo tutto: e mi s'arricciano  
i Peli adosso, poi che vedutola haggiola.<sup>7</sup>

Eromane        E pare, che la anima mia tutta tremante [sic]  
stia sempre in forse di abbandonarmi  
il corpo, come avviene, che io mi ritrovi  
al cospetto di costei.    8

Almost the same exchange of botta e risposta begins the quarrel,

Phe.            Stavomi,  
che in ogni modo non v'e ignuno ostacolo  
D'entrar io in casa tua: che sono il Principe  
Appresso a te,

Thaide        Lasciamo hora le favole:

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5. Eunucho, I.2. 1-14. in L'Andria et l'Eunucho (1544). The comparison is made with this edition because, as ill be pointed out, it is possible that Gabiani was inspired by it for his play. See ch!The theme of jealousy' of this thesis.

6. I Gelosi, I.2.1-3. Compare with 'Miseram me, vereor ne illud gravius Phaedria/Tulerit', Terentii, Comoedias, (1536), I.2. 1-2.

7. Eunucho, I.2. 5-6.

8. I Gelosi, I.2. 7-10.

Phe.           Lasciar? Ò Thaide, Thaide:  
Vorrei Dio mi facesse tanta gratia,  
Che ambedua noi stessimo ad un termine:  
Che o' questo a te dolesse nel medesimo  
Modo, che a me: o' se pur questo è impossibile:  
Io di cio', che tu fai, nulla curassimi, 9

and in I Gelosi, the same biting words welcome Eromane,

Rodietta       Che vuol dire, che tu stai cosi sopra pensiero?

Eromane       Vuol dire, ch'io sono il tuo Eromane, la vita  
tua.

Rodietta       Lascia andar i motti.

Eromane       Che lasciare andare i motti? O Rodietta,  
Rodietta, volesse Iddio, che lo amore mio  
stesse in bilancia col tuo di pari, sì che egli  
adivenisse, che o questo a te dolesse, come  
a me duole, ovvero che io non fossi aggravato  
da cosa, che tu mi facessi. 10

But in the quarrel of the Brescian play, the figure of the servant Parmeno is omitted, so that the lovers face each other without his 'buffer' comments, and his scepticism which Terence uses to introduce the traditional moralizing on the courtesan's fidelity and reliability.<sup>11</sup> The remarks uttered by the servant, when transferred to the lover's lips, lose Parmeno's wise scepticism giving a more caustic tone to the quarrel, and stressing at the same time the motive of jealousy. They sound sharper as they express the lover's struggle not to believe, although he is longing to do so. Thus the proverbial tirade of servants against woman becomes a biting insult when flung straight in the girl's face

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9. Eunucho, I.2. 18-27.

10. I Gelosi, I.2. 18-27.

11. Eunucho, I.2. 33-41; 67-70; 80. These interventions by the servants were often used to create merriment, Duckworth, p. 241; but Renaissance commentators, following the authority of Servius, saw Parmeno's words in this act as those of prudence and wisdom, Baldwin, p. 80; Doran, p. 161.

by the lover:

Eromane        Io non mi maraviglio niente. Che queste sono  
delle tue[...]Ahi maladetto sia la sorte mia  
malvagia. Perche non seppi io prima come  
eravate fatte. 12

The servant's comment on the justification provided by Thais  
ironically sounds doubtful as there is no personal involvement and  
it is somehow addressed to the whole category of courtesans:

Parmeno        Il credo: per amor, si come accadere  
Suole, l'ha chiuso fuori di casa: povera  
l'è d'aver compassione. 13

The same comment is twisted into the obscene pun of Eromane and  
becomes tinged with jealousy:

Eromane        [...] il buon Eromane vien  
di fuori serrato, e è colui dentro ricevuto. 14

Without the character who functions as an outsider and who enjoys  
interfering, 'Dimmi prima che incomincio se costui può t cere',<sup>15</sup>  
the scene is more intimate and the whole tone of the love wrangle  
more amusing, so that a sentence spoken by the lover in Eunuchus ,

Phedria        Hor su forza è  
discendere al tuo voler, 16

can be slightly changed and given a more malicious touch:

Eromane        In fine è forza compiacerti  
Tu vuoi sempre, che la tua stia  
di sopra, 17

which, moreover, does not sound like a salacious insertion for the  
sake of sheer fun, but a spontaneously justified retort stimulated

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12. I. Gelosi, I.2. 108-.

13. Eunucho, I.2. 27-29.

14. I Gelosi, I.2. 113-14.

15. Eunucho, I.2. 32-33.

16. Ibid., I.2. 175-176.

17. I Gelosi, I.2.

by jealousy. Also Thais' request that Phedria should retire into the countryside for a few days so that she may have the girl he loves with her (Eun. 103-8), provides Gabiani with an occasion for further sexual puns and mirth because Rodietta asks permission to keep in her house not a girl but a young man whom she claims is her brother: an ironic plea for Eromane because it could not be better fuel to his jealousy and because it could easily be only an excuse for a Boccaccian deception.<sup>18</sup> This leads Eromane to mock and mimic Rodietta:

Eromane            Egli lascia di continuo un suo famiglio in  
                      casa. Non vorrei, sangue mio, che ti  
                      maravigliassi e tante belle parole. 19

The more lively nature of this scene in the Brescian play, also springs from the author's care to remove the 'rassegnazione che sfiora quasi la malinconia' of Thais' words.<sup>20</sup> Thais' sentences have also been preserved to form part of Rodietta's defence; but Gabiani has introduced into her words further nuances of love. To move him, Thais tries to play on Phedria's soft heart. Rodietta imitates Thais in her efforts to arouse tenderness by stressing her devotion, but her dialogue is also vivaciously enlivened by a display of a more artful coqueterie. She tries the well-known trick of teasing him with recollections of his behaviour:

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18. The adjective does not refer to a precisely similar example in the Decameron - a lover smuggled in as a brother - it refers to the figure of the lover fooled by the woman which is a recurring motif in Boccaccio, in particular, giornata settima.

19. I Gelosi, I.2. 111-13.

20. Croce, 'Terenzio', p. 25.

Rodietta [...] essendo tu lieto, e festeggevole [...] havresti motteggiato, e fatto scherzi [...]  
[.....]  
questa tua serena fronte, e per questi tuoi leggiadri occhi, ond'è escono quelli tuoi luminosi, e ardenti lampi, i quali mi tengono sempre in vivo fuoco. 21

She provokes and excites him by reminding him of her sensuality,

Ah, egli è pure mio fratello [...] Perciò che havendomi esso trovata giovane, morbida, gratiosa; delicata (quale tu mi vedi) geloso divenuto, lasciarmi di continuo un suo famiglia in casa. 22

And it is interesting to note that in these words there is an echo of Cherea's description of the girl he is desiring where 'vi si sente, a ben guardare, un certo stimolo malizioso di voglia carnale',<sup>23</sup> and this is a good example of 'the comico verbale, sulla via del comico superiore, della psicologia e del carattere';<sup>24</sup> an example of how, particularly in these early scenes, Gabiani was successful in his careful introduction of 'Plautine' humour not merely to arouse laughter but to more vividly portray his lovers.

The liveliness which has pervaded the whole quarrel in I Gelosi and which has differentiated the two scenes in spite of their strong similarities, also characterizes its end. Phedria's heavy-hearted words of farewell in his consciousness that the rival Thraso will, at least for the time being, be received by the courtesan and enjoy her company (Eun. 183-185) and Thrais' melancholic reassurance of her sincerity contrast with the euphoria on account of the reconciliation

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21. I Gelosi, I.2. 92-3; 44-6.

22. Ibid., I. 2. 96-.

23. Antonio Barbieri, La vis comica in Terenzio (Milan, 1951), p. 157; Eunucho II. 3. 'un color vivo, un corpo sodo, morbido, piena di suco'.

24. Barbieri, pp. 147-8.

of the lovers in I Gelosi and with the anticipation of their clandestine meeting of love at the expense of the jealous brother 'sciocco e poltrone'.<sup>25</sup> Thus by strengthening the theme of jealousy and love Gabiani has made the play more entertaining from the very beginning, his aim remaining only to elicit laughter. This intention becomes apparent if compared with the satiric purpose of Aretino who transposes the same scene from the Eunuchus to his play La Talanta (I.13). The scene in Aretino is notable for the satirical vein with which the figure of the courtesan is portrayed and for the way in which Terence and the figure of the good courtesan are mocked (I.14.).

The treatment of the traditional episode where the servant and lover invent tricks, offers another example of Gabiani's ability to use slight changes to build up humorous episodes. It also provides an opportunity to point out that although Gabiani shifts from the Eunuchus to Andria, he never does so at random. His choice always falls on those episodes of the two plays which offer the greater opportunity for expansion into comic sketches. For instance the preparations for the tricks are modelled on Andria (II.3.). It is a scene more burattinesca than its equivalent in Eunuchus (II.1. or even II.3.). Here Dolone recalls Davus more than Parmeno, although he is the deviser of both the plan against the father and of that against the soldier. The 'comico di gesti',<sup>26</sup> traditional of the figure of the Italian servant and which characterizes Davus's entrance,

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25. I Gelosi, I.2. 163.

26. Barbieri, ch. IV. For the episode with Davus, see p. 62.

Davus            ond'io di subito  
                 vengo correndo in piazza per contarvele,  
                 se vi vedevo: e, non potendo scorgervi,  
                 monto ivi in un certo alto: guato: volgomi.  
                 [...] Dimandogli [...] duolmi [...],<sup>27</sup>

also accompanies the entrance of Dolone. Dolone bursts onto the stage with his agitated description of his frantic day, almost certainly illustrating the racking of his brain by the traditional gesticulating which, although more characteristic of Plautus, is sometimes present in Terence too:<sup>28</sup>

Dolone            Che? di pensare qualche garbuglio perche  
                 tu non habbia a menare moglie?

Eromane          Si.

Dolone            Vuoi tu credere, che io sono quasi tutto hoggi  
                 corso di su, di giù, per la città, fantasticando  
                 e chimerizzando dintorno a questo? Poi, quando  
                 sono stato stanco, e hommi ben rotto il capo, ho  
                 trovato, che questo è facile facile affare.  
                 Vedi come io ero grossa a non avedermi in un  
                 tratto del come. <sup>29</sup>

Gabiani makes use of the traditional dilly-dallying of the servant<sup>30</sup> pretending to be unaware of the anxiety with which the tormented lover awaits the revelation of the plan, and inserts the droll uncontrollable demonstrations of Eromane's gratitude to the servant,

Eromane          È vero? O Dolone, io non posso contenermi,  
                 che io non ti baci un occhio.

Dolone            Or su, che atti sono cotesti da puttana? Odi  
                 qua se vuoi.

Eromane          Io ti ascolto.<sup>31</sup>

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27. Andria, II.2. 33-39.

28. Ph. Legrand, The New Greek Comedy (London, 1917), pp. 490 ff.

29. I Gelosi, II.1. 5-14.

30. Duckworth, p. 107.

31. I Gelosi, II.1. 15-19.

This gross jest may have been inspired by a similar scene in Plautus's Casina; old Lisidamus is carried away by the prospect of possessing the woman of his desire with the help of the servant:

Lysidamus     Tace.  
                 ita me di bene ament, ut ego vix reprimō labra  
                 ob istanc rem quin te deosculer, voluptas mea;

while Chalinus, the other servant, who is eavesdropping, comments:

Chalinus     Quid, deosculere? quae res? quae voluptas tua?  
                 ecfodere hercle hic volt, credo, vesicam vilico. 32

This part also exemplifies <sup>the fact</sup> that Gabiani, while taking advantage of Plautus's devices to achieve certain comic effects, always avoids his occasional vulgarity. Furthermore, in respect of Andria (II.3. 18-23), the humorous squabble is prolonged in I Gelosi when the servant plays the simpleton, aware of the anticlimactic effect that he is causing by the apparent absurdity of his proposal. Dolone's farcical tone is further intensified by his eagerness to improve his stratagem in order to put an end to the lover's objections and his over-acted sequence of explanations to convince the reluctant lover.<sup>33</sup> Thus merely by enhancing Davus's comic remarks, which he found in nuce in Terence, Gabiani has given to the whole scene - to the beginning of the epitasis - a more hilarious tone.

As the play progresses, this technique is used less and it is noticeable that Gabiani prefers to borrow a comic cue and

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32. Casina, II. 8.452-6, in Plautus, Works, with an English translation by Paul Nixon. (5 vols, London-New York, 1916-38), II (1917).

33. 'Fa così, per giocare di sicuro. Di al vecchio, che da più persone hai inteso lei essere sozza, e contrafatta [...]  
Et tu dirai, che se ella non va, non ti puoi accorgere che non sia sciancata, e così se non favella, che non sia scilinguata,' I Gelosi, II. I. 65-.



expand it into a vignette, caricaturing his characters in humorous situations, or jesting at them.

The same conciseness which characterizes the suggestion to trick the father in Andria,<sup>34</sup> also characterizes the stratagem in Eunuchus, while the presentation of the plans in I Gelosi is developed into a detailed sketch. The comic effect in Parmeno's idea lies in the brilliancy of the scheme and in the suspense in the outcome of the plan.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, although the tricks have some resemblance (in Eunuchus the lover enters the house disguised as a eunuch, in I Gelosi he enters wrapped up in a carpet), the spirit surrounding the deception is different. Cherea's ardour to possess Pamphila is earnestly passionate, as, since Donatus and Servius, all Renaissance commentators as well as modern ones have stressed.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, Dolone's 'bel tratto',<sup>37</sup> as he calls his plan, is conceived and carried out in the most farcical manner. Cherea's seriously passionate words are contrasted a) with Eromane's mimicry of his own sexual desire,<sup>38</sup> with the servant's recollection of his last punishment - a description which once again allowed the actor to use comic gestures;<sup>39</sup> b) with the perplexity of the lover visualizing himself as a future parcel on hearing Dolone's words,<sup>40</sup> and finally with the servant's laughing at his fears from the height of his superiority,

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34. Andria, II.3. 23-7.

35. Eunucho, II.3. 157-60.

36. Herrick, Comic Theory, p. 150. Croce, 'Terenzio' p. 24.

37. I Gelosi, II.1. 120.

38. Ibid., II.1. 106-8.

39. Ibid., II.1. 121-.

40. Ibid., II.1. 133-.

Dolone            Ah, ah, ah, Povero giovane, se a te pare cosa  
nova il lasciarti portare atorno a tale guisa,  
non sarà ella anchorapiù nova, che altri  
giudichi un huom essere quivi aviluppato?  
Come, diavolo, dovrà mai cadere nella mente  
d'umsciocco, che un furfante porti lo amadore  
di sua sorella in una stuoia? e cercarvi dentro?<sup>41</sup>

which still leaves Eromane very concerned about the drollness of his position,

Eromane           Pur quel lasciarmi portare in quella maniera mi  
sa di un non so che. 42

This method of expanding witty remarks into longer scenes has been noticed also in Ariosto when the Italian author is closer to his Latin source.<sup>43</sup>

The perplexity of a young lover faced with the choice of giving up his beloved or being carried to her hidden in a chest is a comic device which Gabiani may have borrowed from the earliest sixteenth-century playwrights such as Ariosto who again, for the sake of comic effect, lingered on the picture of the tricksters' and the lovers' arguments as the stock eavesdropper says,

Nibbio            (Io mi vo' discostar, per non intendere questi  
ragionamenti, che impossibile mi saria udirli,  
e non scoppiar di ridere). 44

Another famous example is in La Calandria where the preparations before Calandrio is persuaded to enter the forziero provide a lot of slapstick to mock the old man's stupidity.<sup>45</sup>

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41. I Gelosi, II.1.138-.

42. Ibid. 144-5.

43. La Cassaria, II.3.

44. Il Negromante, III.3. in Ludovico Ariosto, Opere minori,  
edited by Cesare Segre (Milan, 1954).

45. B. L. Bibbiena, La Calandria, II. 9. in Commedie del Cinquecento,  
edited by Borlenghi, II.

Structurally Dolone's 'facile facile affare'<sup>46</sup> represents the beginning of the action - the preparation for the first move. Therefore this analysis of the comic spirit in Dolone's plan offers also an instance of Gabiani's use of the structure in relation to the comic spirit; of the connection which exists between the modifications that Gabiani made to the Terentian structure and the changes he brought to the Terentian comic spirit. Previously it has been stressed that Gabiani had certainly admired Terence's ability to contrive a well-knit plot and that he even surpassed his Latin model in that respect. One of the examples given was his success in joining all the threads at the beginning of each act, so that the first scene at the opening of the second act gathers all the motifs for the first move: the accumulation of the scheming of the various tricks in one scene produce the comic diapason, with the result that the beginning of the epitasis loses all the dramatic pathos which characterizes Andria because of the fear of childbirth, and the rowdiness of the Eunuchus because of the planned rape of the girl inside her own house.

The other characteristic feature of the pattern of I Gelosi is the neat division of the acts, a division marked by a climax in the action at the end of the act. Each climax corresponds to a comic climax either because of the success of the intriguers or at the sight of the troubles which lie ahead of them.

The first act, which, as we saw, is from its very beginning more humorous than the Latin model, continues and ends in an even gayer mood thanks to the introduction of Zeladelfo, the boisterous soldier

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46. I Gelosi, II.1. 13.

who is also the jealous brother. By introducing him earlier - Thraso only enters the scene at the beginning of the second act - the curtain in I Gelosi falls on the laughter raised by Zeladelpho and opens on the hilarious planning by the servant, which has just been mentioned.

In the same way, the end of the second act sees <sup>the inclusion of</sup> the first part of the son's deception of his father. The idea is closely modelled on its equivalent in Andria - a pretended consent to the marriage - and by means of the already well-tried technique of expanding the most laughter-provoking details, - a few lines are transformed into an episode (I. Gel. II.4. - Andr. II.5.)

To increase the comic sport of this scene Gabiani also borrows a comic device from a later scene in Andria, where the servant over-does his own trick <sup>he is caught in it himself.</sup> *to the extent that* <sup>^</sup> (Andria III.4.) Eromane too overplays the instructions given to him by the scheming servant in such a ridiculously clumsy way that he *ruins* the whole plan and is unmasked:

Eromane        Ah. Era pur honesta cosa, che io prima la vedessi almeno una volta sola.

[.....]

Se voi foste stato, dove io hoggi era, e di lei si ragionava, gia non vi parrebbe maraviglia questo.

[.....]

Che ella ha il naso schiacciato forte, e la bocca torta.

Philerote      Adunque dicono questo di lei?

Eromane        Che ha le labbra grosse, e che è sdentata, e che que pochi denti, che ha sono grandi, e neri.

Philerote      Io non so. Può essere, che io havessi, quando la vidi, le travegole. Ma pure ella parve una giovane più che mezzanamente bella.

Eromane        [...] Dicono, che sente del guercio, ne mai trovarsi senza mal d'occhi.

[.....]

Dicono anchora che ella è di un colore verde, e giallo, e sciancata, e monca della mano destra.

- Philerote      Come è possibile, che huomo si trovi di vista  
                 tanto perversa?
- Eromane        Et che li pute il fiato, e a chi la vede fa venir  
                 voglia di recere.
- Philerote      Deh quanto sciocco sono io, fin qui, stato.  
                 Hora intendo. 47

To stress the comic effect of the Terentian stratagem Gabiani has depended mainly on verbal absurdities and on the tension deriving from the delay in the outcome of the beffa. But at the very end of the act the episodes rise to a climax. A most unexpected twist is introduced creating a different type of humour, that in which the fun arises chiefly from surprises. In fact, despite Eromane's efforts to make his excuse sound as incredible as possible and despite the final exposure of his plan, the father gives his consent to the delay, thus falling - not out of stupidity but out of excessive wisdom - into the trap,

- Philerote      Niuna altra cosa te'l fa dire. Perciò che  
                 assai ti poteva bastare per farla brutta,  
                 quando tu le havessi attribuito una, o due  
                 di tante disparutezze, senza volerla tanto  
                 svilire. Non la ho io mai veduta?
- Eromane        Adunque fatemi vedere, che ella sia altramente,  
                 acciò che io mi cavi questo cocomero di corpo.
- Philerote      Questo farò bene, per levarti ogni scusa. Or  
                 vattene a casa. 48

Thus by modifying the result, this act closes on the success of the first beffa, and the second climax in the action corresponds to a climax of humour with the buffoonery of the son, the irony towards the father and the expectation of the future developments.

Moreover, Gabiani has not allowed the comic spirit to lose momentum between the beginning and the end of the act - between the conception of the plan and its implementation. Between these two

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47. I Gelosi, II.6. 13-.

48. Ibid., II. 6. 120-6.

stages of the action he has inserted further comic moments which structurally act as *trait-d'union*, and act as leavening to the final comic peak at the end of the act. By accumulating several comic episodes he also introduces a blend of comic tones. With the bickering of the two plotters (II.1), the spicy skirmish of the two jealous lovers (II.4.), the plot-complicating misunderstanding of the second servant Siro (II.3.3.), coupled with the second session of Zeladelpho's boastful description of his exploits as lover and as captain, there is not a moment in the act which is not designed to bring laughter and merriment.

The progress of the action towards the second successful trick is accompanied by a crescendo of the comic rhythm.

First there is suspense on account of the possible consequences of the previous misunderstanding of the second servant Simo (III.1.5.), which is intensified by the highest moment of irony in the comedy with the two old men playing into the hands of the slave (III. 2.3.). Then we have the sudden eruption into Plautine belly laughs until the end of the beffa (III. 4.5.6.7.8.). The method used is therefore the same as in the previous act. The carefully planned distribution of the scenes provides here too, and, as will be shown, in the last two acts, a parallel between the acceleration of the action and the impetus of the comic element.

The previous comparisons with the Latin plays or with the Italian sixteenth-century ones, has brought into evidence Gabiani's method of making large sketches from a few comic remarks. As the

action moves forward, this method develops into another similar comic formula: the presentation of the ticks throughout their various stages. So that, by being described at length and taking up a more prominent part in the story, tricks and deceits acquire in I Gelosi a stronger comic role than they do in Terence. This liking of description is displayed in full in the portrayal of the beffa against Zeladelpho.

Terence's introduction of the false eunuch into Thais' house is confined to one scene focusing on the sulking surprise and snappish anger of Thraso, the derisory jibes of Gnato against him and the self-congratulatory chuckling of Permeno. (Eun. III.2.). Dolone is followed step by step as he proceeds. The journey to Zeladelpho's house provides the opportunity for a comic incident with Misi. The panting servant of Rodietta who arrives on the stage in search of Eromane to convey Rodietta's permission for him to steal in at night, gives a glimpse of the pastime of the Renaissance local youths in Brescia, and enlivens the scene with its colourful description of the traditional fortuitous encounter:

Misi	Se costui non si andasse cercando si troverebbe in casa, o per contrada. Ma perciò che fa di mestieri hor hora favellarli, non si sa nulla di lui, ne di Dolone. Or ove potre' io trovarlo? al bazarò? poche volte vi bacica egli. A quattro canti? questa non è la hora. Appresso Disco? A che fare? Io voglio vedere se egli fosse, per ventura, a giocare a Scacchi in casa di Philerote, e trovãdovelo farò in un viaggio due servigi. 49
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The audience's smile at the fretting impatience of the woman has no time to fade before it suddenly switches to a burst of laughter, when on leaving the stage she crosses Dolone who enters carrying the trabacca. His unexpected conversation with the object he is carrying,

Dolone	Io ti appoggerò qui a questo canto, <sup>50</sup>
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49. I Gelosi, III. 4. 1-.

50. Ibid., III. 5.1.

provides the answer to Misi's question: Eromane is neither at the inn nor with his friends but in the most unsuspected of places: hidden inside the carpet. This moment of comic surprise for the audience marks the beginning of an atmosphere of zest which characterizes and pervades the core of the play and differentiates I Gelosi from Eunuchus more than in any other part of the play. It marks the moment where the comic spirit of the Brescian play is closer to the spirit of the beffa which is at the basis of Renaissance comedy, and where also the 'narrative' enjoyment merges with that of the 'vari giochi'.<sup>51</sup> There is in it the same vis comica inherent in the beffa arising from the exaltation of superior intelligence,<sup>52</sup> a demonstration of how to make fun of someone which recalls the Plautine and the novelistic element of the sixteenth-century plays;

Tutto il '400 e particolarmente il '500 è ricco di motivi di beffa. Tali motivi procedono dal Decamerone, ma non come materia astratta: c'è invece un accordo storico più profondo di quei motivi boccacceschi con la nuova civiltà umanistica e rinascimentale, che ebbe il culto vivo e spregiudicato dell'intelligenza, della scaltrezza, dell'ingegnosità, della furberia, dell'abilità. 53

As the argomento announces, Eromane will enter Rodietta's house 'con inganno e astutia'.<sup>54</sup> The scenes are built a) on the contrast between Dolone's cunning and Zeladelpho's boasts which make him an easy target;<sup>55</sup> b) on the direct confrontation between the two forces;

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51. Ariosto, La Cassaria, Prologo.

52. Douglas Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in Italy (Chicago, 1969), about La Cassaria, p. 69.

53. Luigi Russo, 'L'atmosfera boccaccesca della "Mandragola" ', in L. Russo, Antologia della critica letteraria (3 vols, Florence, 1959) II. p. 60.

54. I Gelosi, Argomento.

55. Ibid., III. 5.



c) on the display of Dolone's persuasive ability in inducing the dupe<sup>56</sup> to fall into the trap; and, finally, on the skill of playing on his weaknesses. All these elements are absent in Eunuchus and Gabiani may have found them in the Miles Gloriosus where the protagonist, Pyrgopolynices, the victim of the beffa, a braggart both in feats of arms and love is cheated through his own dreams.

At first, the long dialogue between Zeladelpho and the rigattiere provides the opportunity to portray and expose to ridicule that trait of the braggart brother which is going to be used to carry through the deception against him: his uninhibited high opinion of his qualities as a strategist. In part he recalls the self-portrait offered by Thraso. The claim of the Latin character to a high reputation enjoyed with the highest authority, the king (Eun, III.1. 12-15.), and the vaunts of military exploits (III.1. 22-24.) reappear on Zeladelpho's lips inflated with further details of his imaginary achievements in war.

Zeladelpho    [...] Vorrei, che tu vedessi con quanta gravità  
io soglio sedere fra le corone de Re, de gli  
Imperatori, e di altri Principi, e Signori, et con  
quanta attentione io sono ascoltato, quando  
ragiono della guerra, della pace, del governo  
de Regni, Imperi, e delle Repubbliche.

Sannione      Costui non dice mai se non miracoli, e riesce  
uno sciocco, credēdo farsi stimare Orlando dal  
quartiere.

Zeladelpho    Parla, che io ti intenda.

Sannione      Dico se voi sete anchora per fare vostra vita  
con que vostri Re, e Imperatori, Duchi, e  
Marchesi, che non doveste vendere si belle,  
e care cose.

Zeladelpho    Tu dici il vero, che i pregiati, e horrevoli  
arnesi sogliono far riguardevoli i capitani.  
Ma che mi curo di quello io havendo già  
acquistato il credito, et fatto la riputatione?

Zeladelpho per haver condotto a fine tante imprese, e Maraviglie, come sa il mondo. Senza che gli arnesi non sono quelli, che mettono i par nostri avati, appresso alle corone, et a gli scettri. Ma questa quà si bene, che importa il tutto. Va domanda in Acarnania, in Egitto, in Soria. Domanda di me in Aphrica, in Guascogna, in Boemia, e sopra tutto in Mesopotamia, e sentirai la relatione, che te ne sarà fatta.

Sannione Signore, troppo paia si scarpe mi bisognerebbe, affare così grande scorribanda pe paesi, dove voi havete guerreggiato. Et certamente io comprendo, che sete huomo da far stupire chi non vi conoscesse. Come fanno de barba-rianni gli altri uccelli. ah, ah.

Zeladelpho A me non istà bene di lodare me stesso.

Sannione Saviamente, perche, chi si loda s'imbroda.

Zeladelpho Ma ti dirò ben questo, che ovunque io mi vado, maraviglioso, e attonito rimane ciascuno, quando sono mostrato a dito, e attorno mi si dice. Ecco colui, che tenne tavola in giostra a tutti i cavalieri del Regno.

Sannione Si, forse, co'l ceffo a mostaccioni.<sup>57</sup>

There is also the Thrasonian boast of an innate elegance of manner, but here only the ridiculous hint, and not the pathetic touch in Thraso's boasts has been preserved: in Thraso's delusion of some grace of manners had lain his hopes to win Thais' favour (III.1. 1-9). Although more hilarious because more repetitive, Zeladelpho's part is more uniform than Thraso's. Terence varies his scene with Gnato's biting quips,

Thraso Vero. Egli mi dava il carico, ne le sue imprese, di tutti gli esserciti: Et di tutte [sic] i secreti ero partecipe.

Gnato Gran scuro.

Thraso Finalmente, quando satio se ritrovava di trattar con glo homini.

Gnato        Si ritirava à viver con le bestie.  
              [.....]

Thraso      Anzi egli è huomo di pochissimi homini

Gnato        Anzi di nulla, se suol teco vivere.<sup>58</sup>

The unexpected stalling of the plan because of the unexpected suspiciousness of the victim<sup>59</sup> also belongs to the spirit of the beffa - both in Plautus and in Renaissance plays. This leads to a counterturn which destroys all hopes and promises to entangle the action even further.<sup>60</sup>

The overturn of events carries with it also a reversal of roles. It is now the turn of Eromane and Dolone to arouse laughter with their initial self-confidence being transformed into surprise and complete loss.<sup>61</sup> The amazement of the two who are trapped is matched by the even greater surprise of Zeladelpho and Sannione, who are expecting money or goods<sup>62</sup> not a man.

But as in the previous trick against the father, this time too, the main function of this reversal is comic. Gabiani uses it to engineer another tableau to portray Dolone's contrivance of another 'carotta' as he calls it.<sup>63</sup> Comic tension continues to rise before Zeladelpho's anger and stormy questions, because he has also recognized Eromane as the man he had met earlier in the day<sup>64</sup> talking to .

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58. Eunuchus, III.1. 25-37.

59. I Gelosi, III. 6. 79.

60. Ibid., III. 7. 1-3.

61. Ibid., III. 6. 86-. For the comic created by bewildered disappointed servants, see Duckworth, p. 316.

62. Ibid., III. 6.0. This scene is very similar to that in La Calandria when Calandrio, hidden in the trunk is discovered by the customs officers: 'Oh, oh, oh, Questo è un morto', but in this play Calandrio's stupidities destroy everything III.2.

63. I Gelosi, III. 7. 10.

64. Ibid., I. 3.

his sister and who had answered his suspicious questions by declaring an interest in his trabacca. At the same time the audience is entertained by Dolone's desperate attempts to manufacture another stratagem to save a situation which seems irreparable and to carry through his project to defeat Zeladelpho's jealous custody; he enjoys his dilatory tactics by playing on Eromane's justified fears, by stirring up Zeladelpho's mania for fights - he invents the story that Eromane is escaping because, during a brawl, he has killed a man - and by playing on his vanity until he strikes the right note and accuses him of cowardice (III.7.). A comic sketch based on the trickster's efforts to frame a trama<sup>65</sup> on the spur of the moment is a common feature of classic comedy. What distinguishes Dolone's effort is not the brilliancy of the expedient, but the tactful slow psychological work with which he gradually makes Zeladelpho forget his fears of being swindled, concentrating his attention only on the abhorred charge of cowardice. Dolone displays the art of the boxing champion who wins not by attacking with straight blows but by working inside until the adversary who was on the attack is forced to defend himself. After delaying an answer for as long as possible, Dolone casually inflicts his first stab by suggesting that Zeladelpho has never been in a brawl. It is an insinuation that Zeladelpho cannot bear:

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65. I Gelosi, III. 7.

Zeladelpho Se io ho mai fatto quistione? io capitan  
vecchio? Io, che ne ho scañati a migliaia  
negli steccati? Ah, ah, ah, Vedi come parla  
questa bestia; 66

no less than he can resist being fascinated by Dolone's description  
of the brawl,

Dolone Tanto meglio adunque. Or essi entrati in  
parole, in un momento pervennero alle villanie,  
e alle arme. Ma non così tosto costui, tratto  
ebbe la sua, che al nimico mandò a terra uno  
spicchio di testa. E pensando di non essere  
stato visto, se ne tornò a casa. Pensate se  
vi mancavano le chiese; 67

until, blinded with admiration for someone as heroic as he  
imagines him to be, he is moved towards this new trap laid by  
Dolone, and cannot withhold his admiration:

Zeladelpho È ben da negare una tale prodezza. Leva  
su valent'huomo. Dammi la mano. 68

Detail after detail pours forth from Dolone's imagination until  
the soldier finally invites him in and offers hospitality.<sup>69</sup>

The act thus closes with the full success of the first stage  
of this plan. Zeladelpho had the whip-hand but has failed to use  
it and has allowed the two enemies to extricate themselves from  
the dangerous tangle they had thrown themselves into.

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66. I Gelosi, III, 7. 65-7.

67. Ibid., 69-.

68. Ibid., 87-8.

69. Ibid., III. 7. 148.

The length of this episode confers a mirthful tone to the whole play. As in the second act, the climax to the success does not coincide with a deflation of the comic tension, because, until the lover is in the house, there is the danger of further complication.

In accordance with Gabiani's treatment of the tricks, the plan conceived inside the house is narrated in detail to the audience by the escapees. Dolone's description recalls and enlarges on Cherea's rejoicing at the success of his love encounter, (Eunuchus, III.5.), a scene whose comic spirit has often been described as Plautine.<sup>70</sup> In both there is delight in the success of the trick, at the self-congratulatory tone of the intriguers, laughter at the expense of the duped, and opportunity for the mimicking ability of the actor.

A more specific echo of Plautus is detectable in the actual episode of the summa epitasis. Gabiani has built it on the same comic principles which are the basis of the whole Mostellaria. The second part of the beffa in I Gelosi, the night-<sup>time</sup> elopement with the soldier's belongings, the unexpected arrival of the old father and the attempt to fool him are comically linked in the same way as the intrigues in Plautus's play. As Plautus in the first act<sup>71</sup> lingers on descriptions which make the subsequent arrival of the father a complete surprise (I.1.4.), so Gabiani too builds up conditions to make the counterturn of the epitasis totally

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70. G. Pasquali, 'Un personaggio e due scene dell' "Eunuco" ', Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica, 1935, nuova serie, XIII, fascicolo II, N.2, pp. 1-29.

71. G. Duckworth, 'Introduction to Mostellaria' in The Complete Roman Drama, edited by G. Duckworth (2 vols, New York, 1942) I, p. 619.

unexpected to the schemers and thus holds the audience in suspense. Everything is going well for the lover. He is shown as indulgent, forgetful of the world, oblivious to the still existing risks and of the fact that he is escaping with Rodietta and Zeladelpho's money.<sup>72</sup>

The amusement of the audience is certainly not shared by Dolone.

Rather, it is increased by his fear for himself.<sup>73</sup> As in

Mostellaria (II.1.) the sudden set-back created by the unexpected arrival of the father brings at first disarray in the over-confident tricksters,<sup>74</sup> mixed with irritation at the discovery, the feverish search for a way out, and the traditional rescue at the hands of the quick-witted servant.

As in Plautus, Act II is devoted to the servant Tranio's lies to deceive the old man, so in I Gelosi the scene is centred around the servant's efforts to 'fashion' another story to gull the old man. In Plautus the servant resorts to a story of ghosts, in Gabiani Dolone tells of a house fire. But in both cases the source of fun is the struggle between the endless resources of the servant's cunning and the over-suspicious father, until the latter gradually surrenders (Most. II.2., I Gel., IV, 4.).

Then there comes the sudden climax of the reversal. In Mostellaria this is because of the arrival of the usurer (III.1.), in I Gelosi it is because the father has noticed the pilgrim disguise which Dolone wore in order to cheat Zeladelpho and smuggle in Eromane. In both, the shocked schemer, almost paralysed by fear and surprise, frantically improvises a cover for the whole. But, while in the

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72. I Gelosi, IV.3.

73. Ibid., IV,3.

74. Ibid., IV.4.

Latin play the attempt succeeds and the new excuse (the sale of the house) comes unstuck only in the next act (IV.4.5.), Dolone's desperate mumblings immediately fail and lead to the collapse of *his* action.

In the other two tricks surprise was achieved by the unexpected failure of the plan and in Act II by the even more unexpected surrender of the victim. Here Gabiani reverses the action. First the father is convinced, then he unmaskes the servant, thirdly there is the usual further counter-attack of Dolone but this time it is followed by a turn of events which capsizes the servant's victory. Gabiani plays a great deal on the element of surprise to create the comic effect in all the four stages of the two tricks. At the moment of the summa epitasia, he relies on the audience being accustomed in the previous cases to the successful solution of the servant's plan. He may even have been relying on the audience's thorough knowledge of the Mostellaria to increase the surprise. He certainly was aware that the audience's curiosity about the outcome was heightened by the fact that they saw, from the very beginning of the encounter with the old man, that Dolone was still wearing his disguise and this no doubt increased the tension of the expectation.

Although the comic moral in both plays is that the devil teaches tricks but not how to disguise them, in I Gelosi there is also a trace of irony towards the servant who has, as it were, been hoisted with his own petard, as he too is sadly aware,

sciocco, io mi sono, per aiutare altrui, da me  
medesimo murato in un forno. 75.



The same sbadataggine also causing the falling apart of the servant's plan is at the basis of La Cassaria,<sup>76</sup> and Gabiani may have been inspired by it particularly because it is one of the most entertaining episodes in Ariosto's comedy with Volpino building up a complete elaborate story until the 'whole elaborate structure of lies crashes'.<sup>77</sup>

On two occasions - when the father unmasks Eromane's attempt to convince him that the girl might be appallingly ugly and when Zeladelpho unmasks Dolone as a false pilgrim - the comic effect of the beffa sprang out, to a large extent, ~~from~~ the structural development of the action. Both beffe proceed through the same stages as the action of 'whole comedy'. Therefore the same dramatic expectati ns are used to reach the comic: the initial 'error' which creates the danger (periculum) for the characters and the complication (nodus) and the sudden reversal from happiness to unhappiness, that is to say protasis, epitasis, summa epitasis and solution.

The second phase of the plot against the old fathers - the kidnap - differs from the spirit of the traditional tricks of this comedy all belonging as they do, in their variety, to the classical traditions. Although it is conceived with the same lightheartedness as the usual disegni of the servants and the lovers, what differentiates the abduction of Pericallea by the gang of the lovers' friends is at once the seriousness of the mischief, the realism of the description and its relative lack of a literary tradition.

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76. La Cassaria IV. 7.

77. C.P. Brand, Ariosto (Edinburgh, 1974), p. 39.

Although in Andria and Eunuchus there are two attempts to seize a girl, in both cases the woman is not a citizen and the offence at the time of the accomplishment lies in the disobedience to the father (Andria) and in the spoiling of someone else's property (Eunuchus).

A kidnap along the road during the girl's journey to church, torn away from her mother's arms is - at least as far as can be found - outside the tradition of comedy and of the story of intrigue.<sup>78</sup>

There is no similar example in Plautus or Terence and it is certainly not a common trick in Italian Renaissance comedy. The rape is frequent but it either takes place inside the house where the man has entered in disguise or it is related afterwards. It is therefore the more significant that the closest model for Gabiani may have been Ruzzante, an author who strove to depart from the Latin tradition and portrayed the life of those times with deep realism.

In Ruzzante's Fiorina, the most rusticana of his plays, the lover tries to gain the girl for himself by abducting her. Ruzante, the lover, upon advice of Bedon, kidnaps Fiore while she is filling a bucket of water,

[.....]

Ruzante    Mo an: se la criasse?

Bedon      E ti stropeghe la boca, che la no passa criare.  
Insìn che te può haer del bon, no star a guardare,  
chè Dio sa se mè pì te vagnerà sì fata ventura. 79

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78. D.P. Rotunda, Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose (Indiana, 1942). Giambattista Pellizzaro, La Commedia del secolo XVI e la novellistica anteriore e contemporanea (Vicenza, 1901); see also the word 'rapimento' in Tommaseo and Bellini, Dizionario della lingua italiana. The only kidnap in Boccaccio is not part of a novella built on intrigue.

79. Ruzzante, Fiorina, IV,1., in Commedie del Cinquecento, edited by Borlenghi, II.

Fiore      No mi, n'he paura. Mo a' no vuò vegnìre.  
Ruzante    A' veerì adesso s'à vegnerì.  
Fiore      Deh, stè fremo. Che s' s'a' me cazo a criare! ...  
Ruzante    Cassì s'a' me cazo a criare an mi, che a' crierò  
            pì forte de vu. Metì pur zò sti sigi, e  
            vegnì via.  
Fiore      Oh poareta mi. Pare... o pare! Lagheme, ve digo.  
Bedon      Stropèghe la boca che la no crie.  
            [.....]  
Ruzante    No pianzì, ogio me belo.  
Fiore      Oh, poareta me, disgrazià.

But in I Gelosi the peasant antics of Ruzante have disappeared as well as the improvised amateurism of the kidnappers. The protagonists are young respectable citizens of the town (II.1.) who can rely on the complicity and the organizing ability of friends of similar status:

Siro        In fine io ne sono con Dolone, che il meglio  
            sia il levarcene domani una buona hora avanti  
            di, e aspettare, che ella se ne vade a nostra  
            donna di Neamoni. 80  
Philerote   Di questo e detto a bastanza. Ma venirano  
            poi Difilo, e Geta ad aiutarci?  
Siro        Così mi hanno promesco.  
Philerote   Dove la attenderemo noi?  
Siro        Qui in sulla strada. 81  
            [.....]  
Siro        Resta di ramaricarti, e vattene in casa, fin che  
            io vo a conducere Difilo, e Geta, i quali ci  
            aiutino spedirci in un tratto, e a darci la  
            cosa franca. 82

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80. A famous monastery in Schio where the play is supposed to take place.

81. I Gelosi, III.3. 1-8.

82. Ibid., IV. 1. 17-19.

[.....]

Tu, con costui, come esse arrivino, dando di piglio a Pericallea, la condurerete in casa. Ritrahetevi ben sotto la porta, che non foste veduti prima, che bisogni, acciò che ad un tratto sia il tuono, e il baleno. Etio, con Geta, mi farò contro al resto delle donne, et le teneremo impedito, fin che voi habbiate fatto il fatto vostro. Ma avertite a non lasciare alle grida. Et eccole a tempo. (IV.5.10-).

These elements, the realism of the scene similar to that in Ruzzante, the self-confidence of the young men lead one to think that Gabiani here was inspired not so much by literary tradition as by a familiar social custom of his time.<sup>83</sup>

The non-classic derivation of this trick and its contemporary indigenous roots are confirmed by a similar episode in a Sienese farce. In the rustic farce Coltellino by Lo Strascino, that is, Niccolò Campani,<sup>84</sup> the protagonist is Berna, a 'villano' unlucky in his amorous attempts, who tries to take the beloved 'Togna a forza', but the brothers, who have been alerted by the woman's shouts, run to her rescue and beat up Berna in proper country manner. But Zeladelpho's hurling of insults and gruesome threats under the delusion that they would frighten and provoke the surrender of the adversary as if they were real artillery shots, the darting in and out of the windows of the servants' heads appearing to him like an 'ascoso li essercito in casa', dispel, under a storm of buffoonery, the serious tone of the kidnap. The whole scene

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83. For 16th century documents on elopements and kidnaps of reluctant brides, see 'Matrimoni nel Cinquecento', in Romolo Putelli, Vita, storia ed arte bresciana nei secoli XIII-XVIII (2 vols, Breno, 1939), II, pp. 95-123. Other episodes are reported in Storia di Brescia, II. p. 309.

84. (Siena, 1520). According to Luigi Tonelli, in this play 'si rappresenta comicamente e satiricamente la vita campestre', L'amore nella poesia e nel pensiero del Rinascimento (Florence, 1933, p. 224).

of his heroic assault extending over the end of the play is the decisive proof of Gabiani's search for Plautine humour in Terence. The 'catastrophic' situation has lost not only the pathetic note of the Andria but also Cherea's and Parmeno's grotesque moments of danger. The limelight is not on the troubles of the beffatori but on those of the beffati, whose slapdash charlatanism ironically makes the offended look like the offender.<sup>85</sup>

The whole act is a magnification of Thraso's attack on Thais's house (IV.7.), the most farcical episode of the Eunuchus, humorously complicated by further misunderstandings, with the braggart soldier looking for 'colui, che ha condotto via colei'.<sup>86</sup> The story is not hurried towards the end in a rash search for a solution. The act centres not on the recognition, but on the battle itself. The braggart's attempt to attack the wrong house to liberate the wrong woman gradually develops amidst a chimerical picture of blood, Turkish style tortures, daggers, Durindane,<sup>87</sup> and enemies cut in two:

perche io voglio far pestare questi ghiotti più  
minutamente, che non si fa la carne del porco, quando  
si fanno i salciccioli: 88

all this amidst a recollection of knightly feats against facchini, children and whores (V.7.) up to the moment of the real siege with the thirty alabardieri lent to Zeladelfo by Monese, a local signorotto. All this is to allow the soldier a better display of his pusillanimity for the fun of his enemies as well as of his

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85. I Gelosi, IV, 9. 46-.

86. Ibid., IV.7.6..

87. Capitano Torquato too, in Ludovico Dolce's play Capitano (Venice, 1545) boasts that his sword is more famous than the Durindana, V.1.

88. I Gelosi, V.7.18-20.

temporary allies. The act proceeds with the carefully arranged strategic orders given to his troops by Zeladelpho, his marshalling of them against the house arranged so that the self-appointed 'Capitano e Sergente' may lead the army from behind, the full retreat on the run with his troops as soon as the old landlord appears at the door (V.11.) and the consequent quick surrender and compromise of Zeladelpho (V.12).

The fact that this last act too forms a comic episode in itself, provides an opportunity, before presenting Gabiani's use of comic irony in relation to the theme of jealousy, to suggest as a conclusion, that the act-division and the distribution of the comic effects in this play indicate that the stage-director's intention was to provide an episode and a comic unit for each act in order to insert five intermezzi, one after each act. It was perhaps to plays such as these that Anton Grazzini was referring when in the prologue to La Strega he makes the Argomento say:

Già si solevon fare gl'intermedi che servissero alle  
commedie, ma ora si fanno le commedie che servono agl'  
intermedi. 89

Though there are no printed intermezzi in the editions of I Gelosi consulted, and there is no certainty that the play staged with a moresca in 1548 in the Broletto was I Gelosi,<sup>90</sup> it is the form of each act, which consistently coincides with one episode and gathers at the beginning the threads of the various plots so as to refresh

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89 . Op. cit.

90 . See ch. 'Comedy Performed in Brescia' in this thesis, n., 34. For other examples of dramatists who provided some of their comedies with five intermezzi, see Goggio, p. 334, n., 38. For a discussion of the five-act structure as a consequence of insertions of interludes in Latin Drama, see W. Beare, The Roman Stage. (3rd edition, London, 1968).

the audience's memory,<sup>91</sup> which may be in itself evidence that the play was divided by five long spectacular intermezzi; for this reason perhaps the audience could enjoy a whole beffa with its comic climax at the end of each act so that the merriment and fun would not be lost even if the thread of the plot had been forgotten because of the magnificence of the intermezzo performed between the two acts. This could also explain why in I Gelosi all the ironic episodes which form such an important feature of the Andria have been left out or manipulated for the sake of more immediate laughter.<sup>92</sup> The only case of irony, though a fine one, is in fact confined to the fifth act when, as we shall see in the next section on the relation between irony and jealousy, the contrast between Zeladelpho's moral boasts and his final compromise is dealt with in one act, so that the irony in the contradictions in his behaviour have more chance of being taken in and enjoyed by the audience.

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91. Many argomenti or prologues in Renaissance comedies express the worry that the audience may have difficulties in following the plot.

92. Simo over-reaches himself thinking that the news of Glycerium's baby is a trick devised by the servant (Andria, III.1.); Davus's pretence with the father to be genuinely trying to match Chremes and Philumena (Andria, III.2.) by means of which he prepares his own trap and his own defeat. (III.4.5.).

### The Theme of Jealousy

By calling the play I Gelosi,<sup>1</sup> Gabiani showed that giving a common denominator to his stock-characters, he intended to go beyond the play of intrigue and use a motif to unify his scenes and episodes.

None of the characters in this play presents the obsession which monopolizes the main character in comedies having a similar title, such as Il Geloso by Ercole Bentivoglio or La Gelosia by Anton Grazzini. For in these, the jealousy is more similar to egocentric Plautine passions such as the avarice that affects Euclio in Aulularia. The jealousies of the young lovers in the Brescian play are very close to the amorous feelings felt by the young lovers in Eunuchus where, as Melanchthon said, by comparison to Andria, love is presented as a folly.<sup>2</sup> Eromane's and Periergio's jealousy is the traditional capriciousness that Servius saw in the Terentian lovers;<sup>3</sup> it is the fickleness that Horace defined as inherent in the nature of the young man.<sup>4</sup> The feelings of the characters of the two plays differ only in so far as they are differently described by the protagonists. It is a question of

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1. 'La Comedia [...] si chiama I Gelosi, per essere le persone, che in essa intervengono, da varie e diverse gelosie molestate', Prologo.
  2. 'Superiori Andria fabula proposuit modesti adolescentis exemplum [...]. Hic nulla sunt honesta exempla, nullum honestum consilium. Nam meretricis amores describuntur; ut hoc exemplo cernant juvenes, tanquam in speculo, amentiam huiusmodi amatorum, 'Argumenta Philippi Melanchthonis' in Terence, Comoedias (1536).
  3. Baldwin, p. 180.
  4. Horace, De arte poetica, 160-5, in Tutte le opere, edited by Ennio Cetrangolo, Latin and Italian text (Florence, 1968).



definition and even perhaps of translation.

It is interesting that neither in the original text of Terence's Eunuchus nor in other sixteenth-century translations of it published in Venice at the time,<sup>5</sup> are the lovers' passions described by the word jealousy, with the exception of the previously mentioned translation, L'Andria et l'Eunucho di Terentio, per Gio. Giustiniano di Candia, in Venice, 1544. With it, as indicated earlier, I Gelosi has in common not only this important word-concept, but also a number of significant details of language. The word 'jealousy' is used three times in I Gelosi: by Eromane to describe his condition to Periergio,<sup>6</sup> by Rodietta to describe Zeladelpho's feelings towards her<sup>7</sup> and by Eromane to reproach Rodietta for her suspicions.<sup>8</sup> In the 1544 translation, Thais describes Thraso's changed feelings towards her with these words:

Ma poi c'hebbe notizia  
De fatti tuoi: e che ancho ho l'amicitia  
Tua: ò gelosia, o altro che lo stimoli 9 [...].

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5. Terentius, Aldi (Venice, 1517). Terence, Comoediae Sex, apud Octavianum Scotum D. Amadei (Venice, 1544). Terence, Comedie di latino in volgare tradotte, con gratia e privilegio dello Illustr. Senato Veneto, 1538. Terence, Comedie di latino in volgare tradotte, stampate in Venetia per Gioan Padoano nel mese di agosto 1544. Terence, Le comedie volgari, di nuovo ricorrette et a miglior tradottione, in Vinegia, 1546, Aldus.
6. 'Sappi, che altro non è di ciò cagione, se non troppo amore, e gelosia', I Gelosi, I.1. 24-5.
7. 'Perciò che havendomi esso trovata giovane, morbida, gratiosa; dilicata (quale tu mi vedi) geloso divenuto, lasciami di continovo un suo famiglio in casa, ibid., I.2.100-2.
8. 'Deh, di gratia, lascia una volta di martoriarmi con tante tue gelosie', ibid., II.4.4-5.
9. L'Eunucho, I.8. p. 40v. (my italics).

It is perhaps possible to suggest from this that the unifying motif of Gabiani's comedy may have derived from the 1544 translation rather than directly from Terence, an interesting example in itself of the importance and influence which this type of secondary source may have had on comedies imitated from Terence.

In I Gelosi, jealousy is not a complicated or elaborate passion. It is the traditional straightforward fruit of excessive love<sup>10</sup> represented according to the origin of the word;<sup>11</sup> it is the zeal generating from it that makes Eromane incapable of bearing a separation of a few days and urges him to prepare a plot, that stirs up the suspicious animosity which moves Rodietta to speed up the night encounter and rob her brother, that excites that fear of irreparability and the sense of injustice which leads Philerote to kidnap the girl.

Jealousy hardly gives a separate identity to the two young protagonists of the play. The actions which it inspires show the same intolerance towards obstacles and the same rash audacity and tendency to the bravata, for the imposition of force more or less masked by cunning. Love is, for both men, similar to Cherea's sexual desire and is devoid of any concern for and kindness towards the woman. Neither Eromane nor Philerote shares Parmeno's gentle understanding for Thais. His love differentiates him from his brother because it is less selfish and more ready to yield.

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10. The metaphors for their jealousies are fire, and a chain of steel, while in Bentivoglio's Il Geloso, jealousy is a plague, I.3.

11. Angelico Prati, Vocabolario etimologico italiano (Milan, 1970).

Their language, inspired by love and jealousy, individualizes them even less. Their soliloquies and love declarations bear the stamp of the most worn-out Medieval love language. Their idioms compete in conventionalism. Philerote has removed from his vocabulary the celebrated words of unbounded sexuality which personalizes Cherea (III.5.) and has substituted them with an asexual poetic greeting to the rising dawn,

questa è la piu bella hora, che desiderare potevamo.  
Ecco come pian piano se ne vien via la aurora. 12

What distinguishes them is their beloved, the woman of their heart. Philerote never has a love dialogue with Pericallea who appears on the stage only when kidnapped. On the contrary, Rodietta's scenes of jealousy which - as pointed out before in detail - go a considerable way towards differentiating this play from those of Terence, bring Eromane into relief and give him more colour.

Of the three young lovers Rodietta is the most successful of Gabiani's creations. She is the most vivid and least close to the Latin model. She is certainly not like Glycerium, the woman of Andros, who, represents for Croce,

[1a] poesia del dolore sconsolato, della vigile sollecitudine affettuosa, della donna che s'abbandona e cerca e trova rifugio nella protezione dell'uomo amato. 13

But she is not Thais either, with her altruistic concern for her girl, and her wise understanding for the false Eunuch.<sup>14</sup> Rodietta

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12. I Gelosi, IV.1.1-4.

13. Croce, 'Terenzio', p. 23.

14. The anticonventional treatment of courtesans by Terence in his plays has been recognized throughout the centuries, see the caustic comment by Aretino, La Talanta, I.14; the moralistic words of G. Norwood, The Art of Terence (Oxford-Basle, 1923), pp. 58 ff; the social approach of Luciano Ferelli, Il teatro rivoluzionario di Terenzio (Florence, 1973), p. 40.

would never have yielded to a disadvantageous compromising of her status. Like the Terentian courtesan, Rodietta too is a charming woman but the readers' sympathetic response does not spring from her humanity but from her spontaneous coqueterie, and her spontaneous balance between her concern for material advantages and sexual pleasure. Although she is not an idealist, her words and her dialogues with her servant never betray any greediness (III.4.). She is often cunning but in order to enjoy love rather than money. In spite of the traditional asides of the servant against courtesans' nature which are scattered throughout this play, she is not a two-faced character, the crafty courtesan alluring the naive young man. Her game of love with Eromane is played on an equal basis. She is called 'incantatrice' but her spells are those of Cupid, her scenes of jealousy, even when artificially whipped up, reaffirm the Terentian saying that 'l'ire degli amanti soglion essere rinovation d'amor'.<sup>15</sup> Her unashamed declarations of love, her zest and pleasure in flirting with her man do not associate her with the famous lascivious and cynically impudent bawds and courtesans portrayed by Aretino in La Cortigiana or La Talanta. Her love language recalls the inebriated love declarations which characterize the respectable heroines of the mid-century Renaissance comedy and distinguish them from the women of the Latin tradition. Her ardent words anticipate those of Pamphila and Emilia, the protagonists in love of Fenarolo's Il Sergio, and of Angela and Valeria, the two famous women of La Venexiana, the play of an unknown Venetian author

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15. Andria, III. 3.

perche non posso io cosi te sempre abbracciato,  
e stretto tenere, come io ti ho col cuore,  
come io ti ho cō queste mie braccia, e satiarmi  
una volta del toccarti, baciarti, e accarezzarti. 16.

In spite of Rodietta's liveliness the characterization of the jealous lovers is too plain to give a physiognomy of its own to the play. What gives unity to the theme of jealousy is the vis comica with which the various jealousies are treated; it is the different ways in which the author laughs at them, the teasing sympathy towards the torments and the stratagems of the young lovers and the biting irony at the expense of Zeladelpho, the jealous representative of family honour.

The sufferings of the young lovers are treated with a playful understanding. The author never mocks their feeling nor the actions forced upon them by jealousy.<sup>17</sup> Love is presented without any direct moralistic or didactic intention. There is no fault in their amorous passion as Donatus and the Northern school of the Christian Terence claimed for the characters of the Eunuchus;<sup>18</sup> the moral is that pointed out by the translator of the Eunuchus in 1544; it lies in the risks, in the possible troubles,

Tal volta è comodo  
Ad arischiarsi, e mattersi à pericolo,  
Come buoni marinari [...]  
[...] perche non si pigliano  
Trutte con brache asciute. 19

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16. I Gelosi, IV.3. 23-7. For a comparison, see the ardent scene of love between Julius and Angela in La Venexiana, III.3.
17. In Il Geloso by Bentivoglio, on the contrary, not only is the old husband derided but also the young lover Fausto is mocked. He is beffato by bad luck, laughed at and his language is caricatured, Dradi Maraldi, 'Introduzione' to Il Geloso, p. 12.
18. Doran, pp. 150. ff.
19. 'Prologo del Traduttore', in L'Andria et l'Eunucho (1544), pp. 37 - 37v.

On no occasion are they unpleasant or despicable; their actions are treated with indulgence. The author constantly sides with them in their struggle. They are the winners, even though thanks to some luck. Whoever opposes them *is treated with* irony.

Zeladelfo is the beffato par excellence and by stressing the ludicrous aspects of his character the author seems to suggest that, even if it is wrong to cheat, with him the moral aspect is irrelevant. Even the senex, who, in the Terentian tradition,<sup>20</sup> is respectfully dealt with, is here not spared the charge of being materialistic and deceitful (II.2.). The love encounters are increased in number in comparison with Terence; they are always a source of comedy and accompanied by knowing winks, never by satire or joking. Gabiani smiles and sides with their intelligence and their readiness to engineer their tricks. This can be seen from the way in which he contrasts them with a fool such as Zeladelpho in the beffa; even the kidnap which could appear less excusable is justified by the parents themselves as an act of youth 'lasciamo andare, che egli portato si sia da giovane'.<sup>21</sup>

By contrast, Zeladelpho's jealous possessiveness towards his sister is lashed with mocking irony. And the sardonic solution of the "sale" of the sister fuses with the fun made, throughout the comedy, of the world of the elderly and the hypocrites who stand against the whims of love.

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20. For a comparison of the treatment of the father in Plautus and Terence, see E. Segal, Roman laughter (Harvard, 1968), p. 19.

21. I Gelosi, V.1. 42-3.

In the wide and varied spectrum of the type of the braggart soldier,<sup>22</sup> Zeladelpho is unique in being formed by the following four traditional traits: the sense of family honour of the pater familias,<sup>23</sup> the sense of property of the pander towards women<sup>24</sup> which makes him a jealous custodian of his sister Rodietta, the Capitano di Ventura and the Bravo which make him the most suitable target for tricks and deceptions and a realistic example of a sixteenth-century bullo di provincia. Unfortunately the potential fruitfulness of this 'invention' is not successfully exploited. Gabiani is even more guilty of the fault which critics have pointed out in Thraso,<sup>25</sup> by which he fails to reconcile the braggart with the jealous brother. Zeladelpho's bravado is a sort of superstructure the primary function of which is to provide hilarity and to make a caricature of the jealous brother. Even if this is a valid and successful means to obtain immediate comic effect, it is counterproductive to the characterization. By making him ridiculously prone to being duped, Gabiani weakens the hypocrisy of his behaviour as family protector at the end of the play.

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22. Daniel C. Boughner, 'The Braggart in Italian Renaissance Comedy', Publications of Modern Language Association of America, LVIII, 1943.

23. This role is traditionally given to the old father or husband.

24. Such as the astute Truffa in Bentivoglio, Il Geloso.

25. Critics have pointed out that in Eunuchus, although the two stories are well-wrought in the action, Thraso's buffoonery does not integrate with the advancement of the two stories, Duckworth, p. 156, Norwood, The Art of Terence, p. 66. Norwood, Plautus and Terence, p. 151.

As a Capitano he is not an adaption for the stage of a figure taken from sixteenth-century life. In this role, more nominal<sup>26</sup> and verbal than realistic, his pride in a noble entourage, the aesthetics of garments and weapons, the value of appearance and decorum, his boasting of a variety of warlike activity (III.5.6.) and his amplification of the most conventional boasts, although valid as source of laughter, as seen before, nevertheless deprive him of actuality and reduce him to Pantagruel-like offspring of Latin comedy. On the other hand, illusions of grandeur do not attract the audience's sympathy, who see him in fact as a pretentious fool. But it is this shallowness which makes him a real sixteenth century figure. His aggressiveness and arrogance are those of a bullo di provincia, of the 'Orlando del quartiere'<sup>27</sup> as Sannione calls him, representing a life-style which links him with the other characters, young buli in love. And this is the other device which gives unity to the group, and a sense of homogeneity to the various episodes of the play, creating and setting them against un ambiente. He is a bullo among other buli; a typical Renaissance Lombard word to define the bravo.<sup>28</sup> It is used of a boorish fellow as well as a bully. Zeladelpho is of the first kind; the lovers are of the second. They bully him, he bullies women. It is above all in his relations with women that his character is portrayed.

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26. I Gelosi, 'I nomi de gli attori'; see also, I.4.16.

27. Sannione Rigattiere: 'Costui non dice mai se non miracoli, e riesce uno sciocco, credẽdo farsi stimare Orlando dal quartiere', I Gelosi, III.5.12-13.

28. Bruno Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana (4th edition, Florence, 1963), p. 396, n.3.; see also a painting called 'ritratto di un bullo bresciano' by Giacomo Ceruti, Storia di Brescia, III, p. 121.



His jealousy towards Rodietta is linked to his thirst for prestige, rank and nobility: to which he adds the claim of being the paladin and the defender of the family honour. It is the investiture with the traditional prerogatives of the pater familias which would give him the opportunity to rule by showing off his power over his sister in front of strangers,

Ben sono stati stregliati i miei cavalli Hipocoristria?  
[...]  
Sono stati rifatti i letti? È cotta la cena?<sup>29</sup>

The peremptory tone often becomes intimidating,

È egli, Hipocoristria, costume in questa città, che le donne da bene vengano così in sulla porta affare risposte a quanti vanno, e vengono? 30

and sometimes menacing, and even physical punishment is threatened.

Però io to comando, Hipocoristria (e apri quà bene gli orecchi) che tu voglia e basta. Ecco quà il castiga pazzi. 31

In addition, his relations with whores - the customary female companion of the braggart soldier - degrade him. He has no woman of his own. Further, he lacks the forceful lust of the Plautinian Miles Gloriosus, the romantic attachment of Brandonio for Gianna,<sup>32</sup> and the brutish ill-treatment characteristic of the ruffian who, through violence expresses his sense of property towards the woman.<sup>33</sup> He is always seen amidst the anonymity of prostitution and its brawls, and is derided as a frequenter of a place in Venice called 'Carampane',

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29. I Gelosi, I.3. 1-.

30. Ibid., I. 4. 1-3.

31. Ibid., 1.4.11-14. See also his insults and threats to the servant, III. 8.

32. Dradi Maraldi, 'Introduzione' to Bentivoglio, Il Geloso, p. 12.

33. Ibid., V.1.

così detto, perché vi si vende più caro il pane, che la carne. Della quale mercantia non vi è minor spacciamento, e derrata, che sia delle arme di Brescia, o de panni di Londra, 34

or he is being reminded of the circumstances when,

... dentro Metellino<sup>35</sup> tagliasti i capelli a quella femminella,

because for him,

così bisogna disciplinare certe bagasce lorde infranciosate. 36

It is a portrait which his women stress by laughing off his insults and retorting with saucy impertinence.

The climax of this role of cheap and petty nastiness is the compromise he is forced to make at the end of the play, where his repeated pretended worries for the moral behaviour of his female household,

se io mi accorgo, puttana, che tu, ne altri di casa si vada rimescolando con huomini, io vi farò cacare il sangue a quante sete, 37

and his insistence up to the very last on his sense of property with regard to his sister,

primieramente, se io voglio bene considerare ogni cosa, una mia sorella unica è stata violata, e rapita di casa mia, 38

is contrasted with his willingness to give her up in exchange for financial remuneration. Through this act he not only reveals the

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34. I Gelosi, III.5. 76-9. See also Sannione's reply to his boast, III.5. 48-9.

35. Metellino is the place where Ariosto's La Cassaria takes place.

36. I Gelosi, V.7. 31-4.

37. Ibid., III.8. 10-12. See also the difference between the mild threats of Thraso to Thais and the insults shouted by Zeladelfo 'lupa, cagna, mastina, traditora', IV. 9. 71.

38. Ibid., V.4. 6-8.

falsity of his concern as a brother, but in practice he prostitutes her by giving her up to Eromane. And his sense of property repeatedly expressed to the point that he uses the impersonal pronoun to indicate both Rodietta and his stolen property,

sete voi per restituirmi il mio, o no?,<sup>39</sup>

transforms him into a 'kept man', suggesting that Rodietta represented for him also a form of maintenance.

The idea of a lover accepting a compromise for money is not new. Gabiani may have interpreted the end of the Eunuchus in this way, seeing a turncoat more in Phaedria than in Thraso, since Phaedria is ready to agree to share his girl for the sake of some financial advantage. Or, he may have picked up the idea of an economic reward for the lover from Ruzzante; once more he may have been inspired by his play Fiorina where the character Marchioro consents to be silenced after all his murderous threats, when he learns his bride is a hard-working labourer.<sup>40</sup>

In comparison with these sources, Gabiani's originality lies in giving this comic hypocritical role to a brother, but unfortunately it is not exploited to the full. An excellent theme for satire, it is overshadowed by the laughter arising from the mock-battle organized by the braggart soldier and the contradiction between his proclaimed strategic plan and his sudden flight.

Though Gabiani chose to use Zeladepho as a source of laughter and not to make his jealousy a motif for social or moral satire,

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39. I Gelosi, IV.9.4-5.

40. Ruzzante, Fiorina, V.

yet he succeeded in creating a picture of sixteenth-century society. Through his characters he portrays the style of life of a group of young men in a sixteenth-century Italian town. Against a background of typical commonplaces of the time, 'di ragione tu dei essere uso a Vinegia, dove si offerisce poco',<sup>41</sup> of topics of the day, on the cost of living and important political events, and of a number of 'supers', appearing or merely mentioned, such as the rigattiere and the accatta-pane,<sup>42</sup> there moves a group of youngsters. They give a picture of the life and atmosphere of a provincial town and form a group of Fellinian Vitelloni.<sup>43</sup> Brescia in the sixteenth century was like Rimini in the 1950's. Morally flimsy and culturally stagnating, the life of this group centres around the usual tavern, the game of scacchi with friends (I.1., III.4), and the spettacoli in expectation of the occasional love affair with a foreign girl,

vennermi gli occhi addosso posti ad una leggiadra  
forestiera allhora di pochi di venuta a stare in Scio,<sup>44</sup>

for a conquest to be talked about with other young men, a temporary form of escape from the boredom of life which refuses to be interrupted by the practical logic of the parents,

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41. I Gelosi, II.5.61-2.

42. Ibid., III. 7.

43. 'A fascinating study of a band of young wastrels, in an Italian provincial town. They pass their time dreaming of ambitious enterprises which they will never attempt; hanging round billiard saloons and dance halls and sponging on their parents and sisters', Connoisseur Films Limited (London Season, 1971-72); see also Renzo Renzi, Il primo Fellini (Rocca San Casciano, 1969), p. 13.

44. I Gelosi, I.1.30-4. The use of a young man Periorgio in the exordium as a protatic character instead of the servant or the father as in Terence is a valid device to create a youthful world.

e sperava di farlami havere con meglio di tre mila ducati di dote, fra case, argenti, te reni, e contanti.<sup>45</sup>

Theirs is a rhythm of life looking for a 'happening', for something exciting like a bulata, or a goliardica prank, and they are ready to run some risk for a night of passionate love, as Eromane does for Rodietta. Or they are ready to impose their own amorous wishes on the strict rites tolerated by society, as in the case of the kidnap, to force a marriage which recalls so closely the still organized fujna in Sicily. They are a category of young men who, at this stage of their life, are not yet given a say in the running of the household, who feel all the frustration of having fought in a war,<sup>46</sup> and yet of having to submit to the will of the father, or in his absence, of other elderly members of the society (II.2.).

It is an extremely individualistic world, enclosed and hostile to outsiders with its hierarchy even among the well-off youngsters of the middle class. These integrati are ready to take their father's place at their father's retirement after a suitable marriage (the meaning of the end of the play for the four couples). They are the victims of a similar world, represented by Zeladelpho:

Mio padre, come ti ho detto altre volte, fù gran gentiluomo, e venendo a morte lasciò un figliolo di me maggiore, detto Zeladelpho, il quale, sì come quegli, che fù sempre prodigo, e vanaglorioso, potendo a sua voglia disporre di ogni nostra sostantia, quella, satiendo tutti gli appetiti suoi, quantunque strani [...] che non andò molto, che egli cominciò assai volte a patirne bisogno; 47

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45. I Gelosi, I.1. 56-8.

46. Ibid., II.2. 21.

47. Ibid., I.2. 65-73.

Zeladelpho is an outcast who is bound to be rejected in his wandering search for the social status of his dreams. And, above all, there is the young signorotto Monese, the bulo above the law, with his castle and his private alebardieri. He too, is ready to enliven his day with a bravaria:

Io mi indovino, Zeladelpho, che tu havresti piacere  
affare qualche bulata. Et poichè che io anchora mi  
diletto vedere di questi spettacoli, io voglio  
compiacerti, 48

playing the arbiter, this time enjoying himself with a deluded braggart instead of with a woman.

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48. I Gelosi, V.7.24-7. See also Argomento: 'empie bravarie'.

A Few Observations on the Language

If the prevalence of leisurely laughter at the expense of a sharper satirical approach can be regretted yet accepted as a deliberate choice of the author, the monotony and the uniformity in the language of the various characters must be considered a deficiency, - indeed the most serious weakness of the play.

These notes on the style of the play are not, it is to be hoped, a masochistic exercise. They are a means of establishing whether the linguistic poverty of I Gelosi was caused, at least in part, by the author's rejection of the local Brescian dialect - that is to say, of the language that was usually spoken in everyday conversation not only by the populace but also by educated people. Thus, by concentrating on the shortcomings of the 'academic' Italian spoken by the characters it is also possible to assess the results of Gabiani's linguistic choice. Finally, this short analysis is of relevance because it indicates the literary links between the Brescian writers of comedy and the Veneto which may in turn be compared with the 'historical' links analysed in the first part of this work.

The style of this play is certainly neither modelled on Terence, nor on the Renaissance translations of his plays. I Gelosi has lost all Terentian conciseness. In the period, 'Totus Parmeno/Tremo horreoque, postquam aspexi hanc',<sup>1</sup> the two verbs of the two clauses describing Phedria's madness of love, slightly lengthened in translation, 'Parmeno i tremo tutto: e mi s'arricciano/I peli adosso, poi che veduta haggiola',<sup>2</sup> are framed in I Gelosi in a period formed by a

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1. Eunuchus, I.2. 3-4.

2. L'Eunucho, 1.2.

main sentence and two secondary clauses: 'E pare, che la anima mia tutta tremante stia sempre in forse di abbandonarmi il corpo, come avviene, che io mi ritrovi al cospetto di costei'.<sup>3</sup> Thais's urging questions presented in a series of direct interrogative sentences in Terence are grouped in I Gelosi in a narrative period starting with 'io temo, che'.<sup>4</sup> Thraso's delusions are expressed most of the time by one sentence, while Zeladelpho's boasts are put forward if not through a complex period, certainly through sentences overloaded with parataxis and continuous inversions.

It is the influence of a most important personage of the Veneto cultural world, Pietro Bembo, which runs through the style of I Gelosi. Bembo's close and frequent links with the Brescian academic world<sup>5</sup> do not provide any documented connection between him and Gabiani, but Gabiani's latinisms, his preference for the trecentesca form of the words, and the abundance of secondary sentences with infinitives can be put down to Bembo's linguistic creed, and consequently as a form of influence from the Veneto, a region which in the sixteenth century 'era all'avanguardia nel manifestare la necessità d'una codificazione grammaticale della lingua'.<sup>6</sup>

However it was not the bembismo in itself which suffocated the dramatic expressiveness of the characters; the fault lies in the fact

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3. I Gelosi, I.2. 7-10.

4. Ibid., 1.2. I-.

5. Storia di Brescia, II, p. 517 and V, the index, ad vocem Bembo. Vittorio Cian, Un decennio della vita di M. Pietro Bembo (1521-1531) (Turin, 1885), p. 230; on Bembo's poem Benacus (1524), see p. 58.

6. Bruno Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 361.



that Bembo's linguistic creed was adopted by an author who did not have his linguistic sensitivity and whose language therefore was clumsy and cumbersome.

The second and more serious consequence was that this 'literary' style is common to every character. There is no variety, no differentiation. The result is that the same rhythm flows uninterruptedly and monotonously throughout the play.<sup>7</sup> As pointed out before, the characters do not stand out for the vividness and originality of their verbal imagination. Their registers of love and bravado are revitalized only by the flippant scambi di battute during the jealous duets and by the jokes and puns which come in reply to Zeladelpho's boasts. The result is that the language in this play is not a means of communication among the characters, as the characters communicate among themselves not through the language but through the imprese undertaken at each other's expense.

The primary technical cause of this linguistic inadequacy lies in Gabiani's decision to neglect vocabulary - the element of the language with the strongest expressive force.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the lexical weakness of the play is not alleviated by an adequately expressive syntax. On the contrary Gabiani restricted the syntactical devices characterising each character, thus making his Italian even more uniform.

As the lexical poverty matched by grammatical limitations is common to all characters, though in different forms, the language chosen for a detailed survey is that of Zeladelpho, both because he is the most prominent character (the faults of his language are typical of those of the other protagonists), and because the language of the

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7. It is interesting to notice that Bembo preferred a humour of action to a humour of language, see Weinberg, I, p. 91.

8. [L'espressività] 'è più evidente nel lessico che in altre parti della lingua', Bruno Migliorini and Fredi Chiappelli, Lingua e Stile (Florence, 1967), p. 243.

braggadacio is largely adopted as a comic instrument in the other two plays of this study and the comparison with them may give a more comprehensive picture.

The grammatical elements chosen to give dramatic intensity to the braggart are reducible to three morphological devices and to an equal number of propositions, all of which help to portray not a boastful Captain but the contemptuous twopenny-halfpenny bully. The arrogance of the man towards everyone is expressed above all through the verbal form of the imperative: 'Fa, che ti ricordi'; 'affarti poche parole, tu mi darai'; 'volgiti in quà, che io non ti intendo'; hor lasciami [...] et dimene';<sup>9</sup> this form not only stresses his sense of superiority and self-conceit, even towards people of a higher social status, but also creates the tone with which Zeladelpho patronises everybody, so that the voi used only once to plead the help of Signor Monese stands out as a sign of bootlicking.<sup>10</sup> Another grammatical constant of this character is the apposition of the pronoun after the imperative which adds a further note of contempt and threat: 'Fa venir fuori tu'; 'levate in su quelle pertichette, quella trabacca voi'.<sup>11</sup>

This device is sometimes reinforced by a vocative which adds a nuance of contempt: 'Mettivi mano anchora tu ragazzo'; 'che fai tu qui giovane?' [to Eromane].<sup>12</sup> More obvious is the use of verbs of command such as 'pero, io ti comando che altri ...'.<sup>13</sup>

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9. I Gelosi, I. 3. 6; II. 5. 59. and 96; III. 6. 29, and also IV. 9. 25; it has obviously not been considered the imperative, when it is required by the context.

10. Ibid., V. 7. 2.

11. Ibid., II. 5. 7. and 43, (my italics).

12. Ibid., II. 5. 44. and 1, (my italics).

13. Ibid.

The second morphological device profusely scattered is the 'egocentric' io in front of the verb, which in Italian is usually left out. As an occasional form it could pass unnoticed and seem accidental but its concentrated presence creates an impact which suggests it is a chosen expedient: 'io ho fatto portare [...] io la ti voglio [...] dove io ho un cortile [...] perche io stava mirando [...] io credo di farti hoggi vedere [...] io voglio, che tu sappia [...]'.<sup>14</sup> The deliberate use is even more obvious when the pronoun is introduced to mock his presumptuous self-assertion by contrasting the singular pronoun with a plural or a collective noun with which Zeladelfo describes his imaginary enemies: 'Io la guadagnai [...] quel di con le arme indosso, che io fracassai, e sconfissi i nimici di sua Maestà'; 'havendo io racquistato il Regno alla maestà del Re';<sup>15</sup> or when it forms a grammatical pun, with Zeladelpho unaware that he is magnanimously granting the adversary what the adversary wants:

Va adunque per essi, che se tu non voi fare a mio modo,  
si ho io in gran voglia di far danari, che farò al tuo.<sup>16</sup>

The morphological device which is most often introduced to give a hyperbolic tone to his language is a series of plural nouns, sometimes made more emphatic by the passive form; 'Ben sono stati stregliati i miei cavalli? [...] Sono stati rifatti i letti?'<sup>17</sup>; but, usually, there is no originality in its stylistic position; they form a list of two, three or four nouns - always concrete words. Most of them

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14. I Gelosi, II. 5. 5., 6., 10., 33., 45., 53.

15. Ibid., II. 5. 19-22; I. 3. 20-1.

16. Ibid., II. 5. 91-2.

17. Ibid., I. 3. 1-3. For a successful use of these stylistic plurals in Tasso, see Migliorini and Chiappelli, p. 221.

are direct or indirect complements following the verb they depend on. The emphatic effect of these idioms depends on the pluralization, not on the position of the plurals. When syntax and grammar allow, the plural partitive is left out so that the limitative function of dei is eliminated and the numerical and pictorial effect is amplified.<sup>18</sup> Zeladelpho does not rely on any rhetorical ability to impress people's imagination - neither does he boast about poetic inclinations nor clumsily embellish his style; the language itself is not a target for mockery or comedy as in the case of some Renaissance soldiers. On the contrary its very lack of stylistic bombast gives to this soldier an identity - the identity of the local bulo.

Syntactically its interrogative and concessive clauses, both characterized by a sharp brevity, play an important part in his style; they enliven the style and break up the literary tone, making it sound more colloquial. They are the only stylistic equipment which gives the tone of a dialogue to an idiom which has practically no colloquialisms. In this case too there is no variety among the sentences, each concessive is similar to the other. 'Tu puoi adunque andartene' [to Eromane] ; vorrò, che habbiano di gratia a poterla vedere [to the passers by] ; ma ben ti apponi [to Eromane] .<sup>19</sup> Significantly Zeladelpho's language lacks those traditional bombastic devices, such as the rhetorical interrogatives. Whenever he expresses himself through a question the result is an intensification of his tone of insolence towards the others, of the

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18. 'Fra le corone de Re, de gli Imperatori, e di altri Principi, e Signori'; 'del governo de Regni, Imperi, e delle Republiche'; 'per havere condotto a fine tante imprese, e maraviglie'; 'correre lancia, [...] combattere sbarre [...] condurre esserciti [...] disegnare trincere [...] fare batterie', I Gelosi, III, 5.

19. Ibid., I. 3. 29; II. 5. 18-19.

bullying tone of the bravo more than that of the dreaming braggart. His questions differ from the rhetorical ones in their form. They are sharp, short and assertive; they lack the elaborate flow of the other type. Sometimes their effect is increased by reiteration, 'Che faitu qui giovane? [...] Quanto è, che sei quà? [...] Che ditu di piacesse?',<sup>20</sup> which gives them a peevish tone.

The variety of the style of this character ends here; these are the characteristics which differentiate his style from that of the other protagonists of I Gelosi. Although, unlike many other comedy braggarts, Zeladelpho does not indulge in soliloquies and is continually engaged in verbal duels, his language still lacks a spoken tone. The construction of his sentences is that of a written language and of a literary style. The Italian he speaks is a codified language characterized by a sequence of correct grammatical relations, so correct that his speech sounds more like a proclamation than an instinctive reaction to the interlocutor.

The 'ricercatezza' of his language is obtained most of the time by those forms of Latinisms which enjoyed the esteem of the admirers and supporters of the Italian trecentesco and of those archaic forms which by the middle of the sixteenth century belonged more to the language of poetry than that of everyday conversation.<sup>21</sup>

The most frequent ornament is the inversione of any part of speech, whether it is the copula, the subject or the pronoun; the inverted construction seems to be governed by the need to stress certain words, more

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20. I Gelosi, I. 3. 1. 3. 18.

21. Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 333.

than by specific stylistic rules: 'Se adunque<sup>22</sup> voglia ti venisse'; 'maraviglioso e attonito rimane ciascuno'; 'e hanno con esso loro condotto via'; 'ne da alcuna mai fui colto'.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately the frequency of this construction eliminates any psycholinguistic value it might have had, and nullifies any attempt to focus Zeladelpho's tendency to overdescribe and overdramatize; being a constant of his speech it gives it an archaic tone which sometimes becomes a clumsy cantilena, or a cacophonous rima al mezzo, as in the sentence 'adunque deono costoro per le prodezze loro',<sup>24</sup> reaching points of verbal tortuosity which suggest that, although only occasionally, Zeladelpho's inability to express himself properly is mocked by Gabiani:

Se io mi pensassi, che per queste parole, tu pensassi  
pur di pensare di dover dire cosa, che si potesse  
sospicare.<sup>25</sup>

Further latinisms encumber his sentences, adding a literary tone to the style, making fluency more difficult and producing stagnation with

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22. 'Sporadico ma sintomatico effetto del latino sull'ordine delle parole è la posizione che l'Alberti dà a adunque, anche, collo-candoli come antem, quoque, Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 293.
23. I Gelosi, II, 5. 98.; III, 5. 36-7.; V, 5. 7.; II, 5. 23. Pierre de Larivey, the French 16th-century free translator of I Gelosi, was very likely impressed by this construction, in fact, 'il faut enfin remarquer un fait caractéristique du français de la Renaissance: l'inversion fait en general place à la construction directe, mais chez Larivey nous avons plusieurs exemples d'inversions dans lesquelles l'influence italienne a peut-être eu sa part', Modesto Amato, La Comédie italienne dans le théâtre de Pierre Larivey, (Girgenti, 1905), p. 45. Gabiani's use of inversion shows how the fault of his clumsy style did not lie in Bembo's rules, but in the excessive use of them by an author who had not his linguistic sensibility. For Bembo's consideration on the disposition of the grammar parts in a speech, see Prose della volgar lingua, in Prose e rime edited by Carlo Dionisotti (Turin, 1966), p. 136.
24. I Gelosi, III. 5. 90. According to Bembo rhymes close to one another give 'piacevolezza', but in excess, as in the rima al mezzo, they provide an unpleasant sound, Prose della volgar lingua, p. 158.
25. I Gelosi, IV, 9. 73-4. (my italics).

plenty of secondary sentences with the verb in the infinitive, with the construction made even more convoluted by the habitual inversion of the words: 'Non è vero cio, che si è detto [...] essersi abbracciate, e havere fatto buona pace insieme'; 'che soperbe, e altiere cose giudico io essere'; 'intendo costui essere agiato di casa, ne havervi gente di rispetto'.<sup>26</sup> There is also one case of an absolute ablative ('la quale domandata')<sup>27</sup> which however marks a sign of departure from the Bembescan rule as the noun agrees with the past participle.<sup>28</sup> The spoken tone is also weakened by the excessive punctilio with which the prepositions are linked within a period. The required conjunctions are always expressed, thus taking away that fragmentation of speech, that syntactical freedom which is a characteristic of the spoken style. The most evident case is that of the expletives. They are certainly not a common element in the speech of this braggart who hardly uses them. However, even when there is a colloquial beginning a lot of its immediacy is lost because there is always a grammatical link with the rest of the sentence: 'Pensa, che il contrapasso è necessario'; 'ma sappi, certo, che io dico'; Ma ti dirò ben questo, che;<sup>29</sup> this is a proof of the conformity of this language to the rules established by the grammarians in the sixteenth century whose influence ' fece regredire fortemente le ellissi dei

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26. I Gelosi, III. 6. 24-6, 42-3; IV, 8. 5-6. 'L'accusativo con l'infinito, specie con alcuni verbi, è indizio di tendenze classicheggianti' in the 14th century and whenever the trecentisti are reappraised, Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 230.

27. I Gelosi, IV. 8-16.

28. Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 393.

29. I Gelosi, II. 5. 29 and 40; III, 5. 3-6.

che relativi e dichiarativi'.<sup>30</sup>

The language has thus been seen as the weakest point of the play, the element which flattens the picture of the life of a group of young men in a provincial town. The main reason for this linguistic inadequacy has been seen to be the use of a language which was 'foreign' to the writer, Italian being for the Brescian Gabiani not a natural language but a cultural acquisition.

The choice of the literary Italian of the trecento thus proves to be another piece of internal evidence, as was the structure, that this comedy was written to please the sophisticated cultural awareness of an audience who could appreciate the scholarly and yet entertaining imitation of plays by ancient authors and who had accepted the linguistic solutions proposed by Bembo.

The local dialect was rejected for the same reasons for which elegant and refined jousts were preferred to the artless and uncouth local drama. This was laughed at by foreign visitors, as records, previously mentioned, have shown. Similarly, the harsh sound of the local dialect on the lips of the young lovers and the senior citizens of a play, would not have been appreciated by the refined audience for whom the plays were organized nor by the Venetian hosts. Both respect for visitors forestieri and a sense on the part of the writer of the cultural inferiority of his local language inhibited the use of dialogue

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30. Migliorini, Storia della lingua italiana, p. 393. See this page also for examples of elisions in Machiavelli, which confirm the anti-toscanità of the "brescian" language in I Gelosi. Together with the more modern form of the order of the coppie pronominali 'Ben tela farai vedere, a poterla vedere, allargatela bene' there are the frequent archaic forms 'data la ho, la ti farò vedere, io la ti volgio far vedere' which still found a supporter in Bembo, *Ibid.*, p. 393 and n., 3.



as a means of realism, of mirroring life. About the comic cacophony of the Brescian dialect there is an episode told by an eminent forestiero, Benvenuto Cellini:

In questo si fece innanzi il ditto Mr. Durante con tanto isgraziato modo e con certe sue parole bresciane, annodandosigli la lingua in bocca, che mai si vidde e senti peggio: mosse lo Inperatore [Charles V] alquanto a risa.<sup>31</sup>

But even more significant is the opinion of the most famous Brecian dramatist, Bongianni Grattarolo, who called the dialect of the Val Camonica, 'la lingua rozza del paese'.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from Bembo's influence on the language of this play, further literary links between the Venetian cultural world and this play may be seen in the publication in Venice of Melanchthon's criticism of Terence (1544), which, as has been seen before, may have been the edition through which Gabiani came into contact with Northern Terentian criticism<sup>33</sup> and the translation of the Eunuchus and Andria in Venice in 1544,<sup>34</sup> from which Gabiani may have derived the theme of jealousy for his comedy.

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31. Benvenuto Cellini, La vita, with an introduction by Enrico Carrara (Turin, 1965), p. 261.

32. Grattarolo, p. 111.

33. See ch. 'I Gelosi. Imitation of the structure' of this thesis, n., 17.

34. See ch. 'I Gelosi. The theme of jealousy' of this thesis, n., 9.

AGNELLA by Carlo Turco

This comedy too with its puzzling title and suggestive explanation by the author,

l'Autto~re si cõtenta, che si chiami l'Agnella, dalla purità di una buona femina, che sotto quel nome conserva la sua parte del maschio, 1

was, like I Gelosi, inspired by and written for an aristocratic audience,<sup>2</sup> but it was intended to appeal to different tastes and to provide different delights: a useful reminder of the complex composition of such a public. Its genesis was neither in the scholarly scrutiny of structural forms of the Latin comedies nor in the free elaborations of their comic motifs. Its origin was similar to that of the numerous Trattati d'amore,

culta e cortigianesca costumanza, che fu diffusissima anche in Italia per allettare e interessare gli animi degli ascoltatori alle dolci arti ed alle fini sofisticherie intorno all'amore. 3

It is a comedy which reflects the high-minded predilection for the fashionable disputations on love and the witty delight in anti-conventional views on the subject. Scenes of intellectual humour, requiring familiarity with classic culture, are combined with salacious scenes on women and love - an attitude characteristic of that literary trend which went back to the fifteenth-century Canzoni a ballo and Rispetti and which ran parallel to the Petrarchist and neo-platonic amatory philosophy throughout the sixteenth-century. And the Latin author hovering behind this work is neither Terence nor Plautus, but Ovid, the Roman writer of the Ars Amatoria and Amores.

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1. Agnella, Argomento.. The meaning of the title is discussed in relation to the theme of love, see ch. 'Agnella'. The title' of this thesis.
  2. See ch. 'Carlo Turco' of this thesis.
  3. Giuseppe Zonta, Trattati d'amore del Cinquecento. Testi (Bari, 1967, anastatic reprint of the 1912 edition), p. 354.

As for the influence of the cultural world of the Veneto in this play, there are traces of Bandello and Bembo but otherwise this work by Carlo Turco is even more remote than I Gelosi from the Veneto theatre of Ruzzante, Andrea Calmo and Artemio Giancarli.

Agnella is a mirror of courtly tastes common to those exclusive literary circles which existed around a court, as in Urbino, around a patron, as in Asolo, and an academy, as in Siena; hence it is a theatre sovrarregionale, without themes, features, motifs or linguistic expressions belonging to the Brescian-Mantuan humus. Therefore the introduction in this comedy of Neapolitan, Spanish, and Bergamasque, though it indicates the search for new linguistic instruments, does not represent, as in the vernacular production of Ruzzante, a moment when the 'proletariato' appeared on the stage,<sup>4</sup> as Ludovico Zorzi describes it. The multilingualism in Agnella is inspired by the same festive sense of superiority against foreign languages and dialects that is characteristic of the multilingual courtly production of the Sienese Alessandro Piccolomini and of the Accademici Intronati.

These introductory observations are intended to serve as a guideline to an analysis of the play structured so as to bring into relief Agnella's similarities with and dependence on other works, dramatic and otherwise, which reflect similar aristocratic pleasures and to link this evidence with the suggestion that this play too, like I Gelosi, presents characteristics which are more typical of Northern European drama than of the most well-known Italian productions of the sixteenth-century.

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4. Ludovico Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Ruzzante, Teatro (Turin, 1967), pp. xxix-xxx.

## A Narrative Structure

The structure of Agnella is not that of the Commedia Erudita, but that of a novella, though aspects of the plot are reminiscent of classical comedy. An analysis and a comparison with its possible sources show that Carlo Turco not only did not share Gabiani's interest *in* a close-knit structure, but that the form he thought the most suitable to fulfill the artistic aims for which it was written, was that of three narrative stories running parallel to each other without interweaving.

As the author does not acknowledge any source and calls his play, 'cosa nova e, di nuovo Auttore vostro Asolano',<sup>1</sup> it is not possible to claim that the fourth novella of the fifth day of the Decameron, the fifth fable of the second night of the Piacevoli notti by Giovan Francesco Straparola and the play L'Alessandro by Alessandro Piccolomini were the models for Agnella.<sup>2</sup> Yet, although the Renaissance theatre is an intricate web woven from novellistica motifs these works seem to present a combination of elements which permits one to suggest that they were possible models of inspiration. Furthermore, apart from the Decameron, which was obviously well-known to all the Renaissance gentiluomini, it is worth remembering that Piccolomini's work L'Alessandro was performed in Brescia in the Broletto in 1546 - as a hitherto unknown record reveals;<sup>3</sup> that

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1. Agnella, Argomento .

2. The two novelle are not suggested as sources of L'Alessandro in the edition of Piccolomini, L'Alessandro by Florindo Cerreta.

3. See ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia' of this thesis, n., 30. It is perhaps therefore possible to add Agnella to the list of plays, which are thought to have derived from Piccolomini's, prepared by Florindo Cerreta in his critical edition of L'Alessandro, pp. 25-32.

although Straparola published this fable in 1550,<sup>4</sup> only one year before Agnella, he was a close neighbour of Carlo Turco. He too was a Brescian, being born in Caravaggio, a centre not far from Asola where he spent his life. He belonged to the Secco d'Aragona family, the same family as the other Brescian comedy writer Nicolò Secco. Therefore, it is not impossible that Turco may have read his stories before they were published. Because it is not only a question of similarity in the kind of disguises and tricks used but also of affinity in the comic spirit with which the elements are joined together, the comparison between Agnella and its hypothetical sources will not be made through a list of possible borrowings but through considerations as to how the various parts of the play are joined together.

An interest in narrative structure was part of the Renaissance Italian tradition, which dated back even before Ariosto;<sup>5</sup> a structural choice which led the Italian dramatists to conform their material to the structure formulated by the early fifteenth-century Florentine scholar Cristoforo Landino. His theory, largely based on the precepts of Horace, still adhered to Servius' interpretation of Terence plays,<sup>6</sup> where 'analysis pays no attention whatever to dramatic structure as such', where the moments of the play stressed

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4. The letter printed with the work is dated Venice, January 1550, see Giovan Francesco Straparola, Le piacevoli notti, edited by Giuseppe Rua (2 vols, Bari, 1927), I, p. 4.
  5. Baldwin, p. 449.
  6. For Landino's theories and his debt to an earlier scholar, *ibid.*, ch. V. especially pp.98, 111-113; for an analysis of Ariosto's I Suppositi and Gl'Ingannati by the Accademici Intronati following Landino's precepts, *ibid.*, pp. 368-9 and 449.

are the 'five narrative actions of the major plot' and where 'the actual narrative beginning of each action determines for him the beginning of the act, without any regard to the necessary stage or dramatic preparation; and without any regard to dramatic structure'.<sup>7</sup>

Carlo Turco turned directly to the novella so that his play is even more straightforwardly 'a tale' than those plays which were cast in the Landino formula.

Agnella is structurally formed by a triple plot - the stories of three lovers. Eugenio's is akin to the episode in Boccaccio (V.4), Giannuccio's is akin to Straparola (II,5) and as an amalgam of a set of three stories - two innamorati and a comic lover all in pursuit of their women - it is related to L'Alessandro.

When the play starts the three liaisons involving the six characters have already come up against some hindrance as the frustrated anxiety of their speeches discloses. Marcio agonizingly determines to conceal his secret marriage with Olinda having heard that his father has organised a marriage for him with Flavia. Eugenio woefully reproaches his inadequate social condition which compels him to conceal his passion for Flavia and makes him unsure of her feelings for him. Giannuccio, 'Scholar Napoletano',<sup>8</sup> pines because his attempted conquest for 'Lamia Cortigiana'<sup>9</sup> is frustrated by the rivalry of Eugenio who is publicly courting her. So, at the opening, Marcio's undisclosed marriage with Olinda and the consequent

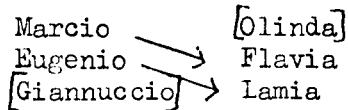
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7. Baldwin, p. 79 (my italics).

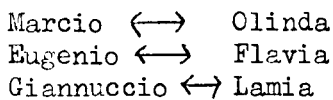
8. Agnella, 'Interlocutori'.

9. Ibid.

marriage planned by his father between Marcio and Flavia links Eugenio's love story with Marcio's: Eugenio's pretence connects his love affair with the couple Giannuccio - Lamia. Thus, through the couple Eugenio - Flavia, a pattern of interrelations is established among the three pairs. With the threads entangled by the opposition the resulting pattern is an asymmetrical one with two loose ends:



The task of the action is obviously to set in motion events so that the solution brings a disentanglement of the threads and recreates harmony by recoupling the six characters in three bonds in the order desired by love:



Two couples (Marcio-Olinda, Eugenio-Flavia) are related according to the Terentian formula of the Andria: two young men's love affairs are broken up by a wedding planned by the old father of one of them. As in I Gelosi the wedding threatens to separate two couples leaving out two lovers. The apparent rivalry between Eugenio and Giannuccio for Lamia recalls the initial pattern of Eunuchus, with Pamphilo and Thraso opposing each other for Thais. But as if Carlo Turco was interested in solving the asymmetrical solution inherent in the pattern of this Terentian play (and in any other play which combined Andria and Eunuchus - such as I Gelosi) he added another character thus starting with six 'heroes' and thus building his play on three threads in contrast to I Gelosi, for example, which has only two.

Not only<sup>is</sup> the character combination modelled on Terence but the whole first act is an exact adaptation of the Terentian protasis so that by the end of the act, the three lovers have presented their crises, the position of their opponents, and have disclosed part of their plans containing further details to increase the suspense exactly as Donatus had recommended:<sup>10</sup> the Neapolitan lover laments he has been trying unsuccessfully for a fortnight to conquer the courtesan Lamia:

e songo homai chiu di quindici giourni,  
che io servo à quissa Signora crudele, e ingrata, e  
non ne haggio ancora, non che havuto lo contiento meo  
ma uno favore che si pozza dimannare favore 11

He has no precise plan in mind to oust his supposed rival, but has placed his hopes in the interested promises of Bolgia<sup>12</sup> the parasite (I.1).

Eugenio is desperately in love with Flavia:

ma non è possibile, ch'io resti d'amara  
à tutte l'hore, o vegli, o dorma, solo in lei,  
e di lei penso, e in lei sola consiste la vita,  
e morte mia . 13

He hopes for some signs that the girl may share his feelings, but because after one year he has not been able to obtain anything better than words from her<sup>14</sup> he has now decided to speed up his attempts with the help of the crafty Agnella, a local pimp, and a familiar figure in the girl's home (I.2.).

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10. 'Protasis est primus actus initiumque dramatis, quo pars argumenti explicatur, pars reticetur ad populi expectationem retinendam', De comoedia.

11. Agnella, I.1. 14-18.

12. The spelling is sometimes Bolza.

13. Agnella, I.2. 123-6.

14. *Ibid.*, I.2. 138.



Marcio should be a happy man because he has secretly married the girl of his heart; yet he is to engineer a way to avoid the wedding his father has planned for him without revealing the real cause of his refusal:

Io, dappoi che ho goduta la mia Olinda,  
son tormentato talmente dal dubbio, che ho,  
che mio padre non se n'aveggia [...]   
e dall' haver udito in casa, che mio padre mi  
vuol dar moglie, che resto quasi fuori di me,  
s'io gli dicessi, che ho sposata costei, mi caccierebbe da  
se. 15

With this careful lay-out of the first act, Carlo Turco has shown that - in the best Italian tradition<sup>16</sup> - he knew what was the function of the first act and that action was to start only and exactly with the second. But, although the characters' relations in the first act are organized so that one expects the play to proceed according to the Terentian formula of a 'struggle in intrigue',<sup>17</sup> with moves and counter-moves to overcome the obstacles, Turco's indebtedness to Terence ends here. Contrary to Terence, the action in Agnella does not develop around the confrontation of two opposing forces: because the initial attempt of the lovers are never contrasted by the opposing characters, neither deliberately nor by accident, each initial problem proceeds not in an expository form but as a tale in a narrative form. The emphasis on narrative is also given by the lack of interdependence between the threads of the play, because the ensuing three actions, after the first act, never intersect each other. While in Terence the dramatic structure

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15. Agnella, I.5. 11-18.

16. See Baldwin, p. 448. See also ch. I Gelosi. The imitation of the structure', of this thesis.

17. Baldwin, p. 9.

is organised<sup>so</sup> as to generate further action out of the complications arising from the interrelations of the plots, in Agnella after the first act the play is formed by three parallel stories and each of them proceeds through 'a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence' and not through stages with the emphasis falling on causality.<sup>18</sup>

The first stage of each plan organised by the lovers (Act II) does not rely on a trick to deceive the opponent, but more simply on the success of the persuasive technique of the go-betweens, and on Marcio's ability to provide justifications for not wanting to marry: these three first steps involve more talk than action so that the second act is occupied with a description of these undertakings. Agnella, the pimp, is shown attempting to persuade Flavia 'a lasciarsi porre la sella',<sup>19</sup> and by the end of the act has successfully carried out her task: Flavia has yielded, 'Horsu, son contenta, havete saputo dir tanto, che l'havete vinta',<sup>20</sup> has avowed her love for Eugenio and has agreed to meet him in her garden at night. The new situation creates further suspense because it is risky for the young man to enter the girl's garden, but it does not involve any of the typical devices of the repertoire of trickery: there is no disguise, no false identity. Eugenio is to rely on the boldness of his love, the girl's complicity and above all on his skill as a lover as Agnella

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18. E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel: ' [...] a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality' (Middlesex, 1968, 1st edition, 1927) p. 93.

19. Agnella, II.1. 17.

20. Ibid., II.5. 120-1.

maliciously concludes the report of her mission to him:

Flavia è vostra, e si contenta, che andate  
a parlargli questa notte nel suo giardino.  
Se vorrete da lei altro, che parole, la colpa  
è vostra, se non l'haverete. 21

Although the act is prolonged by another episode of the Giannuccio-Lamia story, the second act may be seen as the beginning of the epitasis of the Flavia-Eugenio story: a first achievement has been reached and the basis for the next plan presented, and as regards this couple, the act coincides exactly with a defined unit of the action. However, the events concerning Giannuccio too may be interpreted as a first step of his plan, although it is reversed, as in his attempt to send a promising intermediary to Lamia he bumps into the first burla. Chiappino, his young servant, has mischievously invented that Lamia has been heard to avow her love for her clumsy suitor. (II.7). Of this later, when the parodic role of the Neapolitan in this comedy will be described.

The third act brings on to the stage the traditional set-back for Eugenio after the first success. He is informed that Flavia is to be married the following day to Marcio:

Se, chi tiene confidenza nelle cose  
di fortuna, è pazzo, hora in me la speranza  
chiaramente lo dimostra: [...]   
hora, per haver udito, che ella è tosto per divenire  
d'altrui, rimango il piu infelice di tutti, cangiando  
il mio lieto in miserrimo stato. 22

But this information - which traditionally would work as a source of counter-movement, of new initiatives - is structurally dead and as far as Eugenio's plan is concerned, irrelevant. The only

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21. Agnella, II.6. 59-63.

22. Ibid., III.5. 1-10.

effect it has is to make the encounter more harrowingly tender. It weighs on the mood of the young man while he prepares for the encounter and provides the author with the opportunity for a discussion between Eugenio and his friend Lelio on the most proper amorous behaviour. (III.5). The set-back is only apparent, it has no role in the structure of the play; no new opposition is generated out of this information either from Eugenio himself or from Flavia's father who carries on busily preparing, 'Capponi, Pavoni, e altra sorte di polli'<sup>23</sup> for the wedding.

Flavia and Eugenio meet exactly as they have planned, without being even slightly interrupted (IV.7).<sup>24</sup> Consequently the occasion which brings about the reversal of fortune in the middle of the love scene arrives unexpectedly and is inorganically linked. The guards of the Bargello arrive by sheer bad luck. The failure of the plan evolves neither from the action of an opposing force nor from a mistake made by the protagonists.

In this 'plot' the beginning of the epitasis (III. 1.5.6.), the plan to meet in the garden, (II.1.5.6), the climax of the epitasis (the encounter) and the reversal (the discovery of the two lovers) are three stages related only as a series of episodes narrated one after the other, connected in their time sequence not in their causality.

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23. Agnella, III.6. 2-3.

24. The audience does not even witness Flavia's reaction to the news of the impending marriage soon after she has promised in a note to meet a lover for the first time.

Furthermore even the reversal is only apparent, because the audience is informed during the love scene in the garden that the two young people in their eagerness to know more of each other have discovered that Eugenio is the son of Emilio, Flavia's adoptive father. That is to say, the same scene is the solution before being the catastrophe, and the fifth act is left only to the happiness of Emilio who has found his lost son.

The object of this survey is not to point out that Agnella is a set of examples of structural weaknesses, but that it is a play which differs from most Italian Renaissance plays. In fact Agnella is well-organised according to its principles. The point is that these principles are those of a narrative work, not those traditional to a dramatic plot: a form which fits in with the purpose of the author who wished to entertain his gentildonne and highly distinguished audience with some ragionamenti d'amore, not by knotting the stories together but by placing them side by side.

This method is now further substantiated by comparing each tale with its possible model and contrasting them with the way Alessandro Piccolomini intersects his stories.

Each of the stories in Agnella proceeds with the same pattern as its suggested source. The love story of Eugenio and Flavia is told with the same rhythm and spirit with which Filostrato told his 'novelletta assai piccola' to his carefree brigata.<sup>25</sup> In both works the comic spirit is not that of the joke involving deceivers

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25. Giovanni Boccaccio, Decameron, V,4., edited by Mario Marti (2 vols, Milan, 1974,) II. p. 365.

and deceived. It is that of a romantic tale. As the narrator himself, Filostrato, stresses, his theme is 'uno amore', a story which moves smiles and not laughter, built on the same graceful circumstances as the episode in Agnella:

uno amore non da altra noia che di sospiri e d'una  
brieve paura con vergogna mescolata, a lieto fin  
pervenuto. 26

This story develops along three stages in the same sequence of time as Eugenio's story in Agnella.

The opening in Boccaccio presents the radiant beauty and perfection of Caterina, the love and strict custody of her parents, 'con maravigliosa diligenza guardata, aspettando essi di far di lei alcun gran parentado',<sup>27</sup> and the careful attention with which the young man, Ricciardo, keeps secret his love for her,<sup>28</sup> 'e con gran diligenza il suo amore teneva occulto'.<sup>29</sup> It is a situation which Carlo Turco dramatizes, transforms into a dialogue between the parents of the girl (I.3.) and exchanges of confidence between Eugenio and his friend Lelio (I.2.) and forms the protasis of both works.

Being in love, Ricciardo's only desire is to know the girl's feelings towards him; after having overcome his trepidations, he

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26. Decameron, pp. 364-5.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

28. His secrecy arises from the natural discreetness of a lover, Eugenio's, because he is of a lower social class; the effect on the play is absolutely identical.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

is warmly told they are the same as his: 'Del quale avvedutasi la giovane [...]. La giovane rispose subito'.<sup>30</sup> The same anxious fears urge Eugenio to seek through Agnella a confirmation of his hopes. Both Ricciardo, through his direct plea, and Eugenio, through the work of Agnella, obtain the loving complicity of their girl for a night of love. The presence and task of Agnella exhausts itself here; she will appear no more. She is obviously introduced as a comic figure and as a brilliant herald of the women's liberation movement of the sixteenth century, of daring points of view on women and love. But, as for the action, she could have been omitted.

The next stage sees that the dream of the first night of love and the preparations for its fulfilment, which form the core of both works, are disturbed but not broken. Caterina's father is not easily persuaded to allow his daughter to sleep on the verone, but after insistent requests and a little cunning he yields.<sup>31</sup> Eugenio's happiness is shaken by the news of Flavia's wedding (III.5.), but no suspension or interference changes the course of events. At night Ricciardo gains access to the verone:

con l'aiuto d'una scala salì sopra un muro,  
e poi s'insu quel muro...] pervenne in sul  
verone, dove chetamente con grandissima festa  
dalla giovane fu ricevuto. 32

And Eugenio, with the ladder supported by Bermondo climbs the wall, jumps into the garden and gives the girl 'il più dolce bacio del Mondo'<sup>33</sup> (IV.7.). And after the joy of the embraces both couples

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30. Decameron, pp. 365-6.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 366-7.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

33. Agnella, IV, 7. 34-35.

are discovered (IV.7.) with 'una breve paura con vergogna mescolata',<sup>34</sup> but for both a wedding is arranged to seal everyone's happiness.<sup>35</sup>

The pattern of the two stories cannot be described with the classical structural definition of the two tracts 'De Comoedia' by Donatus and Evanthius: in the development of both stories there is no complications, no increase and progression in perturbation, no knot of error to untie. Nor is there a middle part of the epitasis which can be described as 'the involution of the argument, by the elegance of which it is knotted together'.<sup>36</sup> Consequently it is not possible to describe the action with these words, which on the contrary can be applied to the equivalent love story in L'Alessandro.

Also for Cornelio and Lucilia (Piccolomini's protagonists), 'la passione sensuale è piu attenuata e si evolve in sentimento romantico'.<sup>37</sup> Their love too is presented at the start through the doubts of Cornelio (I.4.), his need to know whether the girl loves him or not and the girl's consequent amorous yielding to an encounter in her house, with the lover climbing in with a ladder (I.5.). The story proceeds with the preparations of the tools to enter the house (II.4.). But the third act brings in, as Landino says, 'the perturbation and the impediments, and despair of the desired thing',<sup>38</sup> because, as is revealed at the opening of

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34. Decameron, pp. 364-5.

35. Agnella, V.; Decameron, p. 369.

36. Baldwin, pp. 33-4.

37. Cerreta, 'Introduzione' to Piccolimini, L'Alessandro, p. 19. Cerreta sees the possible influence of Gl'Ingannati in the idea of the youth discovered and endangered, but this cannot apply to Agnella as 'danger' is a feature which adds only tension in the Brescian play, while in the two Sienese plays it is the source of a countermove.

38. Baldwin, pp. 233.



the fourth act, the lovers have been caught inside the house by the girl's father. It is thus necessary for the faithful servant to devise a trick to free the young man, that is, to organise the countermove on the success of which depends the untying of the knot (IV.2.). And it is only in the last act that the successful deception brings a happy solution; but contrary to Agnella, the second move of the summa epitasis is possible only thanks to the interweaving with one of the two other plots - with the story Gostanzo-Brigida.

The same structural features characterise the episode of Giannuccio and Lamia: absence of an opposition, the consequent lack of a struggle in intrigue between two forces and the absence of organic expository relations between the three parts of the epitasis. Giannuccio's story in fact proceeds on a similar line to that of Messer Simplicio enamoured of Giliola, wife of Ghiropo. While the story of Eugenio and Flavia is the narration of a successful love encounter as it is in the Decameron, the story of Giannuccio and Lamia is the tale of a missed one, of a mishap of love, as in Straparola where,

Negar non si può, vezzose donne, che amore per  
sua natura gentil non sia: ma rade volte ci concede  
glorioso e felice fine. 39

But the plot is the same. The first part describes the opportunity to meet the object of one's desires, the second the preparations for it - for a real or a fake one - and the third the actual meeting.

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39. Straparola, Le piacevoli notti, (II.5), I, p. 96.

Both works open with the lovesick protagonists vainly trying to attract the attention of the woman of their hearts. The Paduan citizen 'tanto era dell'amore di Giliola acceso, che ne di giorno ne di notte non sapeva che fusse riposo alcuno';<sup>40</sup> and the Neapolitan scholar is so fired with love that 'non haggio mai bene, ne non quanno io vi veggio'.<sup>41</sup> The coldness of the woman is due to the existence of a husband and of a rival, Eugenio - who pretends to court Lamia in order to disguise his love for Flavia (I.1). This is the situation at the beginning. The favola proceeds to narrate how the lover is duped into believing that he has finally opened a breach into the woman's heart. In fact the 'gentile, accostumata e bella' Giliola has organised a beffa together with her husband; she pretends to accept a visit of Messer Simplicio when her husband is away.<sup>42</sup> *Giannuccio obtains* the same apparent success with the promise of a night of love: in fact she has planned to rob him of his jewels. (III.1). The first action of this plan thus starts only at the beginning of the third act. In between there is a burla played on Giannuccio by Chiappino his servant. At this point it could look as if Turco's play is about to develop differently from his probable source, Straparola's story, but this little episode with Chiappino proves to be only an additional part of the protasis and cannot be defined as the first part of the epitasis because it is in no way connected with the rest of the action. It is only an independent joke,

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40. Straparola, I, p. 96.

41. Agnella, I.1. 54-5.

42. Straparola, I, p. 98.

whose function is to provide comedy, not to forward any further tricks or deceptions.

In the fourth act, both in Agnella and the fable, the beffa prepared for the two men works out as smoothly as planned.

Giannuccio has been convinced that because of a local custom he may be killed if found in Lamia's house by a rival:

se i mariti, padri, fratelli, ovvero innamorati  
trovano huomini con le mogli, figliuole, sorelle,  
overo innamorate loro, uccidono amendue. 43

He has thus disguised himself as a merchant Jew and to be more credible, should he be surprised by his rival, has carried with him his jewels to show as merchandise. In Straparola too the deception is engineered with the help of the simplicity of the man and the complicity of the courted woman. The difference is the kind of reward for the beffatori - the jewels robbed in one case, the satisfaction of a good beating in the other, but the consequences for the beffato are the same. The trick in both is similar. Once Giannuccio is inside Lamia's house the facchino hired for the purpose by the beffatori arrives unexpectedly, nearly frightening Giannuccio to death. Similarly, Girotto the husband, is heard in the courtyard while Simplicio is on the point of having an intimate meal with Giliola. The result is the same. Giannuccio hides himself in a cassa, Simplicio in a sacco, both objects having been previously prepared. And as planned in

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advance, the two containers are, in their respective stories, removed outside the house, hustled and bustled by the carriers, and while Giannuccio had to leave the jewels behind, so Messer Simplicio, in his first attempt to meet the woman of his heart, was beaten up very soundly. And Giannuccio, relating his adventure to the falsely naive Bolgia, tells that,

s'accapricciano i peli, solo à pensare lo  
gramme pericolo, in che io songo inciampato.<sup>44</sup>

Thus as in the previous love thread this one too has no summa epitasis. The reversal of fortune is not exactly such because there has been no initial success; the end of the fourth act marks the desired development of the plan, not the opposite development out of a plan. There has been no conflict either. The actions of the two men (Giannuccio and Eugenio) are never presented as opposed to each other, as a challenge or a counter-challenge, as for instance, in Eunuchus where Thraso's and Phedria's actions were motivated on reciprocal countermoves. Eugenio is the initial obstacle - equivalent to the husband which allows the problem to exist. But the action, the beffa, is concocted by collateral figures and Eugenio is completely detached from this action, so that the story develops in a linear movement without any constructive stage between two points, the start and the finish, so that the initial counterposition similar to that of Eunuchus ends by the first act.

Once more, between the example of Straparola and that of L'Alessandro, Carlo Turco has structurally chosen that of the favola, a straight narrative one, while Piccolomini adopts the

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44. Agnella, V.1. 24-5.

Landino pattern for his comic love affair.

In the first two acts of the Sienese play the old father in love, Costanzo, argues his right to be involved in <sup>an</sup> amorous affair even if old (I.2.), thus falling into the trap organised by his go-between Querciuela and the woman beloved. Querciuela's 'bella pensata',<sup>45</sup> as he calls it, is very close to that of Bolgia. He deceives the old man into believing that the woman Brigida is in love with him, and induces him to go to the desired appointment disguised as 'magnano';<sup>46</sup> this in theory is a precaution against the woman's husband - the Capitano - in practice it is to provide fun for the trickster (II.3.). In this case the intention of the two burlatori is of sheer fun. The old man lured into the woman's house is locked up by her in a room where he is almost choked by the smell (III.4.).

As in the second love story in L'Alessandro (Cornelio and Lucilia), this one too is disrupted during its climax by the unexpected arrival of the rival. Yet this does not put an end to the action, as in the case of Giamuccio. It constitutes a countermove by the opposition (III.4.); furthermore it interweaves with the first love story creating a reversal of fortune (IV.1.). Hence it needs, as in the love story of the young lover Cornelio, further plotting to provide a solution, which comes through the interweaving with the other plots (V.1.3.).

As for the story of Marcio and Olivia in Agnella, no active confrontation arises between father and son either directly or indirectly. Their opposition is a dead end. Its only function

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45. L'Alessandro, II.3. 363.

46. He is a key repairer.

is to stir up the audience's curiosity and thus provide tension because it is like Dámocle's sword hanging over the protagonist's heads. The quarrellers' reaction (father, son and go-between) exhausts itself in a stubborn resistance throughout the play and serve obviously only to allow the writer to insert long dissertations - one for each act, on love and women - between the young man and his tutor. (II.4; III.4; IV.2; V.2.). The father's role is passive too. It provides only a series of scenes with an escalation of threats, but no new devices to find out the real motive of Marcio's opposition. The situation at the end is exactly as it was at the beginning. Consequently because of a lack of action the solution can come only from completely external events, 'per strano accidente'.<sup>47</sup>

The 'agnition' in Agnella is so pieced together, that it has even the touch of a cheeky wink to the ever grumbling Anton Francesco Grazzini, Il Lasca, who attacked similar conventional final scenes of recognition, on historical grounds:

poichè nei giorni nostri non si sono veduti  
accadere giammai, e particolarmente nella Toscana.<sup>48</sup>

As has been shown, Agnella is not formed of ideas collated together from other plays. Its structure is thus neither that of Terence as explained by the Northern school of criticism and adopted by Gabiani in his play, nor the narrative one frequently adopted by Italian playwrights which they derived from Servius

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47. Agnella, V.5. 58.

48. La Gelosia, 'Prologo agli uomini', in Commedie del Cinquecento, edited by Borlenghi, I.

and Landino. Whether this play is an elaboration of a cultural patrimony from the novelle of its time or was directly inspired from the works suggested, the result is a defined pattern formed of three separate lines artificially joined together by means of a Terentian protasis at the beginning and a Terentian 'agnition' at the end. As Gabiani used the structure of I Gelosi to enhance the comic effects of the events, the structure of Agnella is closely related to its main theme - love - and this may be evidence that this Brescian play too, as in the case of I Gelosi, was influenced by trends more characteristic of the Northern European drama than of the Italian one.<sup>49</sup>

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49. This structure which is unusual for an Italian comedy, is in fact not uncommon in English plays of the 16th century where the influence of the structure of the medieval debate interlocks with the structure of the Latin comedy. It is beyond the scope of this work to make a comparison between Agnella and plays such as J. Heywood's Play of Love (1534), and John Lyly's Campaspe and Endimion written in the 1590's. It is however worthwhile noticing the similarities in the use of the structure in relation to the theme of love and, considering the dates of the English plays, explore the possibility that Turco's play, with its contrasts and juxtapositions, may be seen as an intermediate structural stage between Heywood's and Lyly's. Moreover, Lyly's plays were, as Agnella on a more limited scale, courtly plays written to appeal to the sophisticated learned and selected audience of the Elizabethan court, as G.K. Hunter has proved, John Lyly, The Humanist Courtier (London, 1962). The similarities can be summed up in three points: a) the non dramatic structure where the 'thematic interest predominates over mimetic interest'; b) the apparent lack of an organic structure being the play built around debate-themes which give the characters 'their stance in relation to one another'; c) the presence of a parodic plot or parodic scenes contrasting with the serious ones in a symmetrical structure of antithesis and balance the purpose being that of enhancing the difference and hence of relating the contrasting parts, see Hunter, p. 139 and 160-8. See also Peter Saccio, The Court Comedies of John Lyly (Princeton, 1969), p. 4. and n., 2.

## The Theme of Love

The theme which gives dramatic unity to the play is the epitomization of courtly literature: love. The episodes are arranged and related to each other so that the audience is conducted on a tour of complementary and contrasting scenes on this theme, forming a fresco of ragionamenti d'amore. It is not a play à thèse; no theory is put forward. Through a series of juxtapositions and counterpositions love is presented in its several aspects.

The first presentation of love is in the prologue which does not work as a separate introduction but is an integral part of the comedy. It contains the first ragionamento d'amore which together with the title provides a guide to the author's playful humour towards the three love stories.

The prologue is also evidence that Agnella did not slavishly originate out of the traditional interest *in* Latin comedy. Its most likely model was a work of poetry, the fifty stanze by Bembo, of which the prologue of Agnella is a sort of synthesis. The two works share the same amused defence of love, the same complicity with the audience in enjoying per gioco bold encouragements to love<sup>1</sup> and the same amused attempt to persuade women that the worst sinner is,

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1. Bembo himself on the second day of Lent, 1507, wrote to Ottavio Fregoso: 'le stanze, [...] che per antica usanza si donano alla licenzia ed alle feste, affine, che el e si recitassero per giuoco da mascherati [...]. Perioché assai vi dee esser chiaro, che in quella guisa e in tale stagione può peravventura star bene e dilettrar cosa, che in ogni altra sarà disdetta, e sommamente spiacerà. Di queste modestissime stanze sono di qualità, che siccome il pesce fuori dell'acqua la sua vaghezza e piacevolezza non ritiene, così elleno fuori della occasione e del tempo loro portate non averanno onde piacere', Opere (4 vols, Venice, 1729, reduced facsimile reprint, 1965, Ridgewood, New Jersey), III. p. 201.



chiunque opera contra le leggi d'amo e.<sup>2</sup>

This latter is an echo of Bembo's warning that,

e sopra ogn'altro come gran peccato/commette,  
chi non ama essendo amato. <sup>3</sup>

The source of inspiration is thus a series of verses written to entertain the audience of the court of Urbino which were composed so that they could be enjoyed recited as well as read, exactly like the prologues to comedies.

The Stanze which enjoyed in the Renaissance an even greater success than other works by Bembo,<sup>4</sup> were written and recited for a festive occasion similar to those during which comedies were presented in those years.<sup>5</sup> They were 'recitate per giuoco dallui (Bembo himself) e dal S.Ottaviano Fregoso, mascherati a guisa di due ambasciatori della dea Venere'.<sup>6</sup> The festive occasion was the Carnival of 1507, the time of the year when most comedies used to be played; and like many comedies in those years, the stanze were

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2. Agnella, Prologo, 98-9. The playfulness of the tone is brought into relief if compared with Dante's lines on Paolo e Francesca, 'Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona', Inferno, V. 103.
  3. Stanze, 3, 7-8, in Prose e rime.
  4. 'Il successo poetico delle Stanze fu tra i contemporanei maggiore di quello degli stessi Asolani', Giorgio Santangelo, Il patriarcato del Bembo e di altri poeti del '500 (Lectures at the University of Palermo, 1961-2, Palermo, 1967) p. 141; Dionisotti, 'Introduzione' to Prose e rime, p. 32.
  5. See ch. 'Comedies Performed in Brescia', of this thesis.
  6. The complete title is 'Stanze di M. Pietro Bembo, recitate per giuoco dallui e dal S. Ottaviano Fregoso, mascherati a guisa di due ambasciatori della dea Venere, mandati a Mad. Lisabetta Gonzaga Duchessa d'Urbino e Mad. Emilia Pia sedenti tra molte nobili donne e signori, che nel bel palazzo della detta città danzando festeggiavano la sera del Carnassale MDVII', Prose e rime, p. 651.

staged in a private house, recited as an intermezzo, as a part of the programme of festivities lasting throughout the night, and set, like the comedies, against an apparato prepared for the festa.

As the prologue and the prefatory letter to the 1585 edition inform us, Agnella was written and privately staged for a similar aulic and distinguished public in a private house, with a 'magnifico apparato',<sup>7</sup> as Apollo, the actor of the prologue announces:

la sù nel Cielo à gli orecchi di noi Dei è pervenuto, che  
in questa casa s'havevano à far feste, e Comedie, in segno  
dell'alle, rezza, che hanno i padroni di essa. 8

It was to welcome his famous foreign guests perhaps during a break in the Parma war:<sup>9</sup>

con tanto fausto recitata in Asola l'anno M.D.L. nella  
venuta de gli Illustrissimi Principi Francesi il Duca di  
Nemurs, il Duca di Boglion, Marescial di quel Regno, Mons.  
di Bonivetto, il Conte della Rosciafocaut, e altri  
illustrissimi Signori Francesi; [...] vedendosi tanta  
nobiltà di Francia in un tempo ad honorar le case d'esso  
Sig. Carlo, e de i duoi Capitani fratelli Lodovico, e  
E idio, i quali mostrarono, quanto sapevano, e erano  
atti ad accettar Principi. 10

Apart from being 'staged' in circumstances which have many points in common, the Stanze and Agnella's prologue are similar in their

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7. Agnella, prefatory letter by Lelio Gavardo to Nicolò Manassi.

8. Ibid., Prologo, 12-16.

9. In the light of the prophecies expressed by Apollo, it is possible to refer to the war between the Imperial Army and the French King Henry II for Parma (1550-1555). Storia del mondo moderno. La Riforma 1520-1559, edited by G.R. Elton (10 vols, Milan, 1967-70) II (1967), p. 327. Italian edition of the New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge, 1964-70).

10. Agnella, prefatory letter, see above n., 7.

content. Like the Stanze, the prologue attempts to win more women to the reign of love and is in the form of a direct invitation. In Agnella the appeal is directed at those 'bellissime donne [...] che sono nimiche d'amore', in the Stanze it is directed at the women of the court of Urbino who make the town a fortress against love.<sup>11</sup> In both works the invitation to enjoy the pleasures of love is playfully abetted by a god. Apollo himself, in Turco's play, concludes his sermon by giving his pledge:

E voi Nobilissime Donne, siate certi esser vero cio  
che vi ho detto, anzi la verità ist'essa. perche il  
mio giudicio non può fallire. 12

In the Stanze, Venus gives specific orders to her ambassadors:

Però vorrei ch'and ste a quelle, fero/  
solo ver me, [...] /  
dando lor a veder, quanto s'inganni/  
chi non mi dona il fior de' suoi verdi anni. 13

The device of a god to strengthen the authority of the author's appeal was also used by Plautus in Amphitruo. But Agnella's is not a Plautine prologue<sup>14</sup> and Mercury's role is very dissimilar.<sup>15</sup> A more likely example from classic literature which Turco may have thought of is Ovid's Ars Amatoria, where Apollo advises on some amatory techniques reminding the reader of his infallibility and therefore of the validity of his advice.<sup>16</sup>

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11. Agnella, Prologo, 70-1; Stanze, 30.4: 'nemiche e scarse'.

12. Ibid., Prologo, 114-116.

13. Stanze, 10. 1-2, 7-8.

14. For a description of Latin prologues, see Duckworth, pp. 211-18, 390-1.

15. In Plautus, Mercury is also the protagonist of the play, the deus-ex machina engineering all the tricks and his speech in the prologue is limited to an invitation to the spectators to listen in silence.

16. 'Sic monuit Phoebus: Phoebus parate monenti;/Certa dei sacro est huius in ore fides', Ovid, Ars Amatoria, with an English translation by J.H. Mozley (Cambridge-London, 1939), II, 509-10. There is a note on Ovid's influence in Renaissance comedy in Paratore, p.68 n., 83.

Both Bembo and Turco start their appeal with the traditional homage paid to the host of the house and to the audience, gracefully blending it, in the second part, with the discourse on love. In the Stanze, the author's praise for the court of Urbino is inserted in the instructions that Venus gives to her ambassadors (I-14); in Amella the two parts are elegantly joined thanks to the device of the divinatory powers of Apollo, the god of music, light and poetry,<sup>17</sup> who presents his horoscope as a gift of good auspice both to the representatives of the kingdom of France and to the women of the audience: 'i maginandomi niuna cosa poter farvi piu grata'.<sup>18</sup> After the traditional comparisons with the victories of ancient Rome, he first foresees triumphs and victories for the French King:

Voi riporrete i sacri gigli non solo ne i luoghi,  
dove sono stati estirpati, e dove ancora sono verdi le  
loro radici; ma dove mai non furen veduti, nè conosciuti.<sup>19</sup>

Then he forecasts forlorn years for those women who reject love, tempting with images of future happiness and fame those who will yield to his advice to enjoy love.

The prophecy pictures the two opposite fates awaiting women: for those who refuse love the immediate future holds a sad and lonely youth and old age will bring neglect from everyone and oblivion after death:

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17. 'Io son colui, il quale, girando pel quarto cielo, col mio lucente aspetto rendo vive tutte queste cose inferiori [...] presago del tutto, e che l'occhio mio lucido vede i tempi, e i momenti', Prologo, 12-39.

18. Amella, Prologo, 35-6.

19. Ibid., 48-51.

Viveranno giovani scontente, e melanchoniche, e da tutti saranno sprezzate, e nella vecchiezza malediranno se medesime per haver lasciata partir la loro bellezza senza frutto. ultimamente morranno, e con loro insieme morrà la lor memoria. 20

The threat of an unhappy and forlorn old age, which in Bembo is further described with an abundance of similes and metaphors (30.31.32.) concluding his poem,<sup>21</sup> is reminiscent of the most characteristic theme of fleeing time and the consequent need for a carefree attitude to love which runs through some of the Canzoni a ballo of Lorenzo De Medici and the Rispetti of Poliziano,<sup>22</sup> and which is also a motif of Ovid's Metamorphoses.<sup>23</sup>

The opposite picture of the future foresees immediate joy:

Mentre saranno nella fresca etade, cogliendo i  
dolci frutti, che dall'arbor di questo grande Amore  
nascono, vita gioiosa, è à pieno beata vivranno. 24

Then comes self-satisfaction in the old age, and immortality thanks to the works, 'the perne', of their poet lovers. Significantly, this motif, the promise of eternal fame and the comparison with the most well-known love heroines has lost the neo-platonic theory with which it is presented and based in the Stanze (20.21.22);<sup>25</sup> it echoes instead, Ovid's straightforward wordly invitation to

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20. Agnella, Prologo, 71-6.

21. 'ven poi, canuta il crin, severa il ciglio,/ la faticosa e debile vecchiezza,/ e vi dimostra per acerba prova,/ che 'l pentirsi da sezzo nulla giova', Stanze, 49. 5-8.

22. Lorenzo De Medici, Canzoni a ballo, 2(II), 5(IX), in Scritti scelti di L. De Medici, edited by Emilio Bigi (Turin, 1905), p. 212 and n.2 for other examples. See also 'A che ti gioverà tanta bellezza,/ se tu o altri non ne hai di sotto?/ che frutto avrai di tanta tua durezza/ se non pentirti invano, ira e dispetto?', Angelo Poliziano, Rispetti Continuati, IV.6. 25-8 in Angelo Poliziano, Rime, edited by Natalino Sape, no (Rome, 1967).

23. Ovid, Metamorphoses, liber XV, Latin-English text, edited by F.J. Miller (2 vols, London-Cambridge Mass., 1946), I.

24. Agnella, Prologo, 79-82.

25. Stanze, see p. 659. n., 20.

his woman to offer herself as a source of inspiration for his poems in exchange for fame throughout the world.<sup>26</sup>

The similarities continue: to refuse love is an offence against oneself, against the lover and against the world. (The same theme which Bembo uses and that once more goes back to the fifteenth-century tradition of the courtly songs of Poliziano and Lorenzo). Furthermore, apart from similar definitions of love 'soave e dolce piacer',<sup>27</sup> 'Amore, senza il quale non si può haver un'hora lieta',<sup>28</sup> in Agnella, 'quel soave suo dolce contento',<sup>29</sup> '[Amor] senza cui lieta un'ora uom mai non have',<sup>30</sup> in Bembo, what Apollo borrows from Venus's ambassadors is his peremptory tone of exhortation, his direct and frank apostrophe: 'la predica di un amore umanistico quattrocentesco, non senza qualche tocco di franca galanteria cortigiana e popolareggiante',<sup>31</sup> as Dionisotti describes Bembo's provocative tone, which, on the lips of the god well harmonizes with his infallible tone of prophecy. Another common theme is that love and beauty were not given by the gods to inflict pain on men, but only to provide enjoyment:

però che ei ve la diede [bellezza], acciò fosse col simile  
a voi di contento, e di gioia cagione, e non di tormento. <sup>32</sup>

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26. Ovid, Amores, Latin-Italian text, translated and edited by Franco Munari (Florence, 1964), I. 2. 10-19, 25-6.

27. Agnella, Prologo, 101.

28. Ibid., 78-9.

29. Stanze, 39.3.

30. Ibid., 16.2.

31. Dionisotti, 'Introduzione' to Stanze, p. 604 n., 30.

32. Agnella, Prologo, 26-8.

This echoes in Bembo's lines:

Non vi mendo' sua giù l'eterna cura,  
a fin che senz'amor tra noi viveste,  
nè vi diè sì piacevole figura,  
perchè in tormento altrui la possedeste. 33

And echoes too in Poliziano's<sup>34</sup> and Lorenzo's songs,

Non ha dato Natura  
tanta bellezza a voi  
acciò che poi sia il tempo male usato.<sup>35</sup>

It is a theme which is linked with the idea that to act against love is also to do wrong to one's own beauty, as Apollo openly warns, 'non fate torto alla bellezza vostra',<sup>36</sup> and as Bembo concludes 'nè giova al mondo, e se medesima offende'.<sup>37</sup>

It is an argument which is brought to its conclusion by linking love with the need to reproduce, because:

Il mondo tutto, in quanto a sè, distrugge  
chi le paci amorose adombra e fugge; 38

E chi non sà, che, lasciando da parte quel soave,  
e dolce piace [...] in nulla il mondo con bravissimo  
tempo si convertirebbe? 39

And consequently this is an attack on the 'vago errante e stolto' and 'l'alme simplicette'<sup>40</sup> as Bembo calls them, who think love, which is a necessary tool for procreation, is a sin.<sup>41</sup>

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33. Stanze, 34.4.

34. 'E' non ti diè tanta bellezza Iddio/ perchè la tenga sempre  
ascosa in seno/ ma perchè ne contenti, al parer mio,/ el se vo  
tuo di fede e d'amor pieno', Poliziano, Risetti Continuati,  
I (2), 97-100, and also IV (5), 9-13.

35. Lorenzo De' Medici, Canzoni a ballo, 13(XVIII), 29-31, in  
Scritti Scelti, p. 223.

36. Agnella, Prologo, 94.

37. Stanze, 46.4.

38. *Ibid.*, 34. 7-8.

39. Agnella, Prologo, 100-3.

40. Stanze, 36. 3 and 8; see also, Poliziano, IV (6), 13.

41. Agnella, Prologo, 103-7.

Despite Turco's closeness to the model suggested, the Brescian author has selected his material. Thus he has indicated his intention to give his prologue a tone of even greater revelry than Bembo. He has left out the characteristic motifs of the amatory poetry of the Dolce Stil Novo, Petrarchism, and Neo-platonism: the purity of the love encounter, the nobleness of affection and the blessing of the woman's eyes (25.26.).<sup>42</sup> It is an elimination which stresses that this is a prologue permeated with the same aristocratic humour scanzonato with which the author amalgamates the stories of the play; it is a prologue with the same teasing ironic complicity which is reserved by the author for the myth that women are shyer than men and do not enjoy love as much.

The theme of love is the unifying motif of the various episodes not only because in many of them it is a topic of discussion, but also because each plot centres on an attempt to 'conquer' a woman. Each character is characterized by his position towards love so that groups are linked through parallelisms and antitheses. Each group is formed by characters who, though they have in common the same attitude to love, are different because of their style and their social decorum.<sup>43</sup> One has therefore this division: the six characters of the two romantic plots form two groups, each of three characters: a young man representing the unrestrainable force of

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42. Stanze, see p. 661 n., 25.

43. For the concept of decorum in the characterization in 16th century plays, see Antonio Minturno, Arte poetica (1564) ed. Gio. Andrea Vavassori (anastatic copy, Munich, 1971), pp. 115-20, 117-30. The stylistic decorum was prescribed by Bembo, Prosa della volgar lingua, libro II, p. 173, n., I; see also Duran, pp. 77 ff.



love and the right to impose one's choice; a father standing for the reasons of social conventions; an adviser who opposes the arguments of the mind to those of the heart. These two groups are contrasted by a triad representing the problem of love from a comic point of view. To the masculine figures is juxtaposed the group of women related by a common positive response to love but from different social positions.

There are thus different comic levels related to each other in a way which recalls the plays written by the Accademici Intronati of Siena. In Agneola the author co-ordinates the various ragionamenti about love introducing them from different comic angles: an understanding smile for the young men who defend love, including the funny Neapolitan 'scholar' Giannuccio; biting irony against the misogynists; burlesque teasing cheerfulness against the carefree attitude towards love of the characters of the lowest social status; and subtle and witty irony against the traditional image of the woman, coy, shy and hostile to love.

Although Eugenio and Marcio, *like* most other lovers in mid sixteenth-century comedy, are masters of their own stories and their presence is not effaced *by* the schemes of the cunning servant,<sup>44</sup> it is certainly not the very limited action of the play which gives a physiognomy to the two young lovers or which contributes to differentiate them from the nyctics of stock comedy lovers. The situation of risk and anxious plight in which they are portrayed is so uncharacteristic that it does not *give* upon them any particular *identity*, the implicit moral being that

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44. Duckworth, pp. 237 ff.

audacious and persistent lovers are often helped by fortune.<sup>45</sup>

What distinguish Eugenio and Marcio, though, without making them strikingly vivid figures, are their long discussions. The lovers' long monologues, a characteristic of classic comedy which will pass through into the Commedia dell'Arte, have often been found by critics the weakest points of Renaissance playwrights because of their heavy and boring tone, and their appeal to the audiences of the time, which is found rather inexplicable.<sup>46</sup>

The traditional opening monologue of both Marcio and Eugenio is a debate with themselves about love and social status, which in both cases opens into a wider one about the reasons of the heart opposed to those of the intellect in a direct confrontation with another character (Eugenio with a friend Lelio, Marcio with his tutor Menandro); this second problem enlarges into another one by being contrasted with the two old fathers' practical and conventional views on love.

The topic of the opening debate within Eugenio's mind has in it both strong similarities with the traditional Renaissance debate and once again more trace of Ovid than of Plautus or Terence. The motif of the lover's protesting the worthiness of his love despite his low social condition was a common element in Latin love-poetry.<sup>47</sup>

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45. The *range of application of such an idea* is evident if one considers that this interpretation was applied to works as different as Terence's Eunuchus, see the Prologo del Traduttore to L'Andria et L'Eunucho (1544), and the prologue to Gl'Innamati by the Accademici Intronati.

46. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance, p. 109.

47. Ovid, Amores, p. 53, n., 6.

In Ovid's Amores the poet appeals to his girl pointing out his other credentials as lover and urging her to return his love, disregarding his lack of aristocratic ancestors and large family property.<sup>48</sup> In Eugenio's speech the difference in social status is no longer only a private problem among lovers and it has lost the playful suggestion that the woman could acquire fame instead of money. Tarco has transformed it into a problem between the lover and society and the tone has become the serious, self-pitiful characteristic of all romantic lovers, even in Plautus:<sup>49</sup>

O mia signora Flavia, volete  
prima lasciarmi perire, e poi darmi aiuto?<sup>50</sup>

Eugenio's plea is addressed to Flavia, but his argument is against society, and is in the form of the dispositio of an oration rather than an instinctive outburst of grief. His lament of love opens proclaiming his dissent from an established view:

Quanto sia falsa la sentenza di colui, che dice,  
gli amanti doversi contentare della fortuna loro,  
quando amano persone di alto grado. 51

Then he presents his personal case - he cannot hope to marry Flavia because she is above his status - and argues the fallacy of the commonly-held theory by pointing out that it is based on a higher esteem of material wealth than of moral values because,

se la grandezza d'animo, se la saviezza, se le ricchezze,  
che in tutte l'altre fortune potrebbero aiutarti, in ciò  
nulla, o poca speme di rimedio ti portano. 52

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48. Ovid, Amores, I.3. 7-14.

49. There is an example of inescapable petulance in Aicesimarchus's speech, Cistellaria II.i; 'the most romantic' lover in the most 'sentimental' play by Plautus, Dicksforth, 'Introduction to Cistellaria' in The Complete Roman Drama, pp. 34-3.

50. Arnella, I.2. 24-5.

51. Ibid., 1-4.

52. Ibid., 17-19.

The tone is that of a public proclamation and the rhetorical conclusion seals it.

The same topic is the theme of Marcio's exordium but presented from a different angle. This clearly Terentian technique of 'repetition', in its aim of staging a problem<sup>53</sup> confirms Turco's intention to use the traditional love monologues in order to introduce a debate and to focus the audience's attention on the general issue more than on the characters' individual plight. Marcio's case is that of a man whose social status is superior to that of the woman; for him too, the question is not a private matter but a confrontation with society, embodied in the pater familias:

s'io gli dicessi, che ho sposata costei, mi caccierebbe  
da se, con dire, che io havessi tosta moglie di vil  
condicione, e senza sua licenza. 54

The plan of his speech is the same as Eumenio's. Its beginning with its device for arousing dramatic tension and its simile reminds one of Ovid's Amores:

si come l'amalato, che si e in ia hor di letto  
hor di camera, credendo scema il male, lo ritro-  
va sempre il medesimo, cosi anche io, ovunque mi  
vada o stia, provo uguale il martire. 55

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53. The most skilled use of this technique is displayed by Terence in Adelphoe, where the two stories are contrived to develop an educational problem. For further examples of the use of this method to stage various social issues, see Luciano Ferrelli, op. cit. The same technique is applied by Plautus in the characterization, see Ortho Wilner, 'Contrast and Repetition as Devices in the Technique of Characterization in Roman Comedy', Classical Philology, 25, January 1930, pp. 56-71.

54. Apollonia, I.5. 17-20.

55. Ibid., 1-5. The lines in Ovid are: 'Quod tam mihi dura videntur/ strata, neque in lecto patitur nostra dolent,/ et vacuum somno noctem, quam longa, peras i,/ Passurus ve sati corporis ossa dolent?', I.2. 1-4; For the stylistic comment, see p. 45; see also Dante, Purgatorio. VI. 14-51.

Marcio points out, with a tone which has dropped all sighing and has the impetus of a peroration, his intention to challenge the falsehood of a common assumption and then presents his personal case; the rhythm being set by the unrelenting questioning that material values are more important than moral ones,<sup>56</sup> concluding that a man should have the power to elevate the woman by marriage:

convien, che l'huomo facci nobile la donna, e non la  
donna il marito. 57

A similar problem on the difference of rank between man and woman can be read in *Bandello*:

perciò che grave incaro è a donna d'alto le naggio  
prender per marito uomo d'inferior sangue. Il che a  
l'uomo non avviene, chè essendo nobilissimo, ancora che  
pigli per moglie donna di più basso sangue di lui, egli  
per questo non calca di grado. 58

These are words which echo those precettistici concepts with which *Bandello* introduced his novelle. This indicates Turco's familiarity with sixteenth-century treatises of love,<sup>59</sup> and is also evidence that Turco was conversant with topics of debate in courtly literary circles<sup>60</sup> and therefore of the influence of non-dramatic courtly genres in this comedy.

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56. *Agnella*, I.5. 26-43.

57. *Ibid.*, 43-4.

58. Matteo Bandello, *Novella*, II, in *Tutte le Opere*, edited by Francesco Flora, (2 vols, Milan, 1954), I, part I, p. 32.

59. Eugenio's view is expressed in the novella XIV, I, part I, p. 527: 'negli uomini è cosa di gran danno far servitù con donna di più nobil sangue'. The opposite opinion is found in Bibbiena's *In Calandria*, I.2.: 'è gran valore negli omni di amare donne di più alto ligna d'io che essi non sono'; see also Boccaccio, *Decameron* I.5.

60. Bandello himself gives this information in introducing his Novelle, novella III, I, part I, p. 44; novella XI, II, part II, p. 16.

These soliloquies also help to place Amelia in the context of the development of Renaissance comedy, because as Borsellino has pointed out there was an evolution between those in the first plays and those in the production of the second half of the sixteenth-century; in La Pellegrina (1539), for example, one notices 'il gusto delle argomentazioni e delle contrapposizioni trattatistiche e una concettosità che è talora vero e proprio concettismo'.<sup>61</sup> This is a characteristic which was developed even further in the Commedia dell'Arte, where it formed the core of the play with its virtuosini.<sup>62</sup>

After arguing with himself, each lover has a discussion with an 'opponent'. This is a device which gives the writer the opportunity to widen his explorations on love by introducing two ragionamenti on its nature in relation to the intellect: it is a purpose which seems rather clear as both Lelio, the friend, and Marcio, the tutor, have no other active role, and yet have vivid and lengthy parts.

The core of Lelio's speech against Marcio's argument is an attack against love itself. The lover's enemy is not society but his own irrational passion. His reasons are strongly reminiscent of the assumption, so dear to the ancient culture, that love is the enemy of gregariousness and friendship:

La cagione che ti fa star così pensoso, melanconico,  
e amator della solitudine, esser stata, che ti sei  
aviluppato nei lacci d'amore; perchè questi sono  
i fratti, che dal suo arbor si colgono. 63

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61. Borsellino, 'Introduzione' to Commedia del Cinquecento, I, p. xxx.

62. Vito Pandolfi, La Commedia dell'Arte. Storia e testo (6 vols, Florence, 1957-61) II (1957), p. 36: 'Il suo [Isabella Andreini] virtuosismo consisteva nell'operare d'intelletto sulla passione, così da renderla più densa d'interesse, così da renderne vitali gli sviluppi e le naturali soluzioni: una particolare "ars aandi".'

63. Amelia I.2. 42-6. See also Horace, Satire, II.3. 217-280, in Tutte le opere. In this satire love is described as a child's game and the lover as inconsistent and dotingly.

It is also the enemy of intellectual activity:

perche gli è gran peccato, che così in eunoso piovine  
si perda in queste frascherie d'Amore. 64

The conventionalit<sup>y</sup> of these ideas on the nature and the effects of love is an object of comedy since Plautus,<sup>65</sup> but Lelio develops them seriously, not in the form of harangues but as reproachful admonishments and of learned quotations which differentiate his warning from a similar one between Cornelio and Alessandro in the homonymous play by Piccolomini (I.4.). Each outburst of Lukenio's despair,

in fine, io lo conosco impossibile [...] perche a  
risolverti in poche parole, io non posso restar d'amar  
colei, ch'io amo; e, s'io potessi, non vorrei, 66

is contrasted with the Senecan and Horatian view that love is to be shunned because it rules reason, because it affects people like a disease, 'il male', 'questa peste', and cannot be plucked out at will.<sup>67</sup> Therefore the advice cannot be but the same Seneca gave to someone who asked if it was wise to be in love:

levati dall'animo questi tristi pensieri:  
non lasciar, che s'impaltroniscino di te  
piu di quel che sono: cacciati, che ogni di  
ne sarai piu contento. 68

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64. Arnella, I.2. 33-5.

65. Plautus, Trinummus II.1. 260-2: 'fu it forum, fu itat suos cognatos, / fu at ihsus se ab suo contatu, neque cum sibi amicum volunt dici'. See also Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, 'Che non è in somma amor se non insania, / a iudizio de'savi; universale', 21.I.

66. Arnella, I.2. 94-9.

67. Ibid., 80-2. See the same definition in Horace, Satire, II.3, 25) and Seneca who compared emotions to a kind of disease, Epistle, CXVI, in Epistulae Senecae, with an excellent translation by R.M. Gammere (3 vols, London - New York, 1925), III.

68. Arnella, I.2. 8.-5. For Seneca, see 'mihi et tibi, qui adhuc a sapiente longe absumus, non est committendum, ut incidamus in rem commotam, inotentem, alteri occupatam, vitem sibi', Epistle, CXVI.

In spite of the declared intimacy between the two young men their tone is not colloquial; Lelio's, in particular, is sententious and his pieces of advice and opinions on the irrational nature of love are bestowed with a judicially moralistic style which displays his learning in all its ostentation and which may be found dull and artificial by modern readers but which was in fact very likely appreciated by the audience which recognized familiar problems.

The enjoyment of these bookish 'recitals' leads the author to digress into two other favourite ancient issues, the nature of friendship and the choice of friendship before love (I.2.), and man's best reaction to sufferings (III.5.). The first lesson is delivered to the audience by Eugenio himself in an attempt to apologize for not seeking his friend's advice during his love crisis. The lay-out is familiarly oratorical: the presentation of the opinion which is to be contradicted, that is the idea that intimate feelings should not be disclosed to anybody, and the reasons for opposing this view. The moralistic sententious 'wisdom' of the young man is once more that of Seneca's moral epistles and Cicero's De Amicitia, in their arguments about true and false friendship. Seneca's exhortation to Lucilius that one should be able to confide everything to a friend but only after a thorough check on his life,

Diu cogita, an tibi in amicitiam aliquis recipiendus sit. Cum placuerit fieri, toto iunior pectore admitte; tam audaciter cum illo loquere quam tecum, 69

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69. Seneca, Epistle III, 2-3. See also Cicero, 'Est igitur prudentis sustinere ut curam, sic impetum benevolentiae, quo utamur, quasi e suis temptatis, sic amicitia, cuius parte periclitatis moribus amicorum', De Amicitia. With an English translation by W.A. Falconer (London - New York 1983), XVII, 63, p. 172. There is a similar piece of advice in the Decamerone, 4.8.



resounds in Arnella on the young man's lips:

emmi sempre parso, che un'amico sia così tenuto a scoprir  
all'altro i secreti suoi, come colui, che gli ha uditi,  
à tenerli celati. Egli è vero, che si dev' molto ben  
considerare la vita di colui, che si vuol tor per amico.<sup>70</sup>

And Cicero's patronizing warning that it is the task of friendship to  
give and receive advice,<sup>71</sup> echoes in Lelio's words, 'io ti ho detto  
quel che per l'amicitia nostra ero tenuto'.<sup>72</sup> Seneca's authority  
and thought form the cornerstone also of Lelio's theorization that,

tutti gli uomini sono atti a patir le avversità,  
ma pochi à tollerarle. <sup>73</sup>

This is by way of a reply to Eurenio's declaration that whoever  
trusts Fortune and thinks himself lucky is mad. This reaction,  
when he learns that Flavia is to be married, does not modify the  
course of the story in any way, (III.5) as said before, but provides  
the audience with a further display of doctrinal arguing. He imparts  
to his friend a lesson on how 'picciola cosa' a love affair is, and  
reminds him that,

sei uomo, e non femina [...], e il maggior segno di  
grandezza d'animo, che si possa dirvi, che, tanto, che  
sia, l'esser sempre il medesimo nelle prosperità e  
nelle avversità. <sup>74</sup>

The pomposity of these speeches may even induce the suspicion  
that Turco was mildly satirizing the young man or through them the  
sententiousness of the quistioni d'amore themselves, which were so  
fashionable in the courtly circles. Maria Luisa Altieri suggests

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70. Arnella, I.2. 58-63.

71. 'Ut igitur et monere et moneri coprimus est verus amicitiae',  
Cicero, De amicitia, XXV, 91, p. 191.

72. Arnella, I.2. 100-1.

73. Ibid., III.5. 21-2.

74. Ibid., 35-40.

that the language of the lovers in comedy may leave the modern reader in doubt as to the intention of the author.<sup>75</sup> Considering the whole play it seems more likely that the style and the themes reflect the tastes of that age and that the audience did not find anything ridiculous in them.

What is certainly an object of irony is not the style or the tone in itself, but the misogynous idea which inspires Lelio's arguments. It is an ironic attitude which becomes a jestful theme against all cultural and intellectual misogyny and the technical device used to achieve this is a twin figure, another misogynist to argue against the other.

As the ragionamento of the two lovers was built juxtaposing the reasons of a pair of young men, so the debate against love is created by setting side by side a pair of arguers against love. As the two young men defended the same issue - the rights of love - but from two different angles, so the misogynist view is expanded from a discussion on the nature of love into one on the pros and cons of marriage. But with this second couple of contestants - Marcio and his tutor - Turco not only doubles the roles but, with a stroke of originality, he inverts them. The result is to clothe with irony not only the figure of the pedant but also Lelio's speeches and to transform the issue into a playful satire against a whole cultural anti-amatory tradition.

Traditionally the audience would expect Marcio to defend marriage and the tutor to defend celibacy. The paradoxical situation is imposed by external circumstances since the young man is already

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75. Maria Luisa Altieri, 'Appunti sulla lingua della commedia del '500', in Il Teatro classico italiano nel '500, p. 257.

secretly married and his defence consists in pretending to be against marriage. Poor Menandro - a hard core defender of celibacy - is commanded by his employer, Marcio's father, therefore, for financial reasons, to induce the young man to get married. Thus the characters unbeknown to each other but not to the audience appropriate to themselves unashamedly and competently the arguments which traditionally belong to the counterpart: it is an entertaining picture of the flexibility of the cornerstone of wisdom and authority.

The discussion, in this case, is faster moving, almost botta e risposta with the characters alternating in leading the thread of the argument with unrestrained recourse to all possible examples from ancient authorities, from Seneca to Isocrates, and Theophrastus and Socrates. Marcio, who has just married, bases his counter-argument on two main points: marriage is against all forms of intellectual activity because,

chi ha moglie à lato bella, e giovane, ha altro,  
che far tutto il giorno, che star a guardar libri, 76

and all women have intolerable temperaments, so no marriage can be successful.<sup>77</sup>

His sentences are a source of hilarity because they are parrot-like repetitions of Menandro's in a previous encounter and a summary of all anti-feminist home-spun common places of ancient and Renaissance tradition.<sup>78</sup> The entertaining plast city of Marcio's

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76. Arnella, III.7. 53-5.

77. Ibid., III.7. 75-85.

78. More than Terence's scattered anti-feminist remarks (Hecyra, II, 198-204), the passage reminds of Plautus, Miles Gloriosus, III,i; Aretino, Il Marescalco, where<sup>one</sup> there is an actual debate 'pro and con' wife, between the Balia and Ambrosio, I. 6., II.5. and 'Il Convito di messer Giovanni Battista Modio, overo del peso della moglie', in Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna, edited by Giuseppe Zonta (Bari, 1913) p. 326. For a bibliography of sources and adaptations of literature against women, see G. Highet, Juvenal the Satirist (Oxford, 1954), p. 254, n.,2.

pictures of married life contrasts with the humourless theories of Lelio. With the famous comparison taken from Theophrastus between the woman and animals such as the horse, the ass, the ox and the rignmarole with the description of all women's faults, his peroration results in a torrent of words, un dibattito-fiume, to use an expression of parliamentary jargon.<sup>79</sup>

The two arguments are easily rebutted by Menandro who replies using the same authorities as Marcio: Socrates married twice and still became a great philosopher (III.7.) and Theophrastus as well as Seneca and Isocrates also quoted examples of happy marriages (IV.2.). While this verbal contention between the pupil and his tutor enhances the intellectual independence of the young man whose mastery of the classics ironically recoils against its artificer, it shatters the intellectual credibility of the tutor.

Menandro, one of those characters who, with their caricaturized features, recall Plautus's humour, is not treated completely unoriginally and strongly contributes towards giving the play something more than farcical humour. Nevertheless combining as he does only two stock features of the character of the pedant, miso gyny and unrestrainable use of Latin, his role is strongly limited. In him there is neither a touch of the clownishness of the old fool in love as in Cleandro dottore in Ariosto's I Suppositi nor is he decided as a braggart scholar as Messer Piero in Gl'Ingrannati by the Accademici Intronati, who shows off a pretended culture. Nor is he only a macchietta for the fun of the young servants.<sup>80</sup> His role is only that of tutor and his specific task is, throughout the play,

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79. Agnella, IV.2. 65-95.

80. Ibid., II.4; IV.4.

only to act as an intermediary between father and son. It is in fact significant that, in spite of his not immaculate Latin, he does not stuff it with the traditional howlers; he is not ridiculed as tutor and several examples in the play point out his sincere fatherly affection for Marcio,<sup>81</sup> the devotion and deference to the young man,<sup>82</sup> and the trust of the father. In spite of the long farcical monologue<sup>83</sup> with which he presents himself at his first appearance - a Plautine feature - he has neither the vigour nor the bold relief of Plautine caricature and is not an independent character despite his prominent part in the play.<sup>84</sup> He exists theatrically in so far as his other half exists. They are two inseparable halves and they are both created by their verbal clash. Thus Turco's humour does not strike at the grotesque shortcomings of an individual. His excessive use of Latin quotations are not instruments of a 'parodia buffonesca'<sup>85</sup> to hit at a category, nor are they inspired,

da un'intenzione satirica, dalla volontà di scrollarsi di dosso il peso dell'umanesimo, nelle sue espressioni più retrive e più vicine ad una nuova scolastica. 86

These are the two comprehensive reasons for the existence of this figure in the learned Renaissance comedy. No, Turco's irony is directed against a form of cultural misogyny, against a concept,

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81. 'Il voglio non con minaccie cercar di ridurlo in voluntatem patris, m. con le pr ci, e persuasioni amorevoli', Agnella, IV.2. 10-12.

82. Marcio tenderly admits 'Il i (sic) vero vi amo da padre, e cosi volontieri farei i commandamenti vostri, come quelli, di chi m'ingenerò', Ibid., III.7. 129-131.

83. Ibid., I.4.

84. See Aretino, Il Marescalco, Francesco Belo, Il Pedante, and Giordano Bruno, Il Candelaio, where the main protagonist is the pedant himself.

85. Pandolfi, La Commedia dell'Arte. Storia e testo, II, p. 10.

86. Ibid., II, p. 10.

un ragionamento d'amore, not against a physiological characteristic as in Il Marescalco. Thus his irony is not against a physical 'oddity' as in Aretino but against a cultural oddity. Marcio's weakness is not physical, it is intellectual. What is exposed in him, a man of culture by profession, is his intellectual dependence, which makes him resort all the time to the support of established authorities both for arguments in which he firmly believes and also for arguments he rejects. He is an intellectual turncoat, and in this way he is a *mock*er of real culture, almost pathetic in his betrayal. He *agrees* to repudiate his most cherished ideas, he who flattered himself because the Governor had retained him,

à ragionar seco di profondissime scientie, perche  
l'acume dell'ingegno nostro penetra i piu difficili  
passi di Filosofia. 87

The irony becomes even more sharp towards the end when, having abdicated his principles in order to secure his job, he is then dismissed as he, a misogynist, has not succeeded in persuading Marcio to take a wife.

It is, however, indicative of the light-hearted purposes of the author that in spite of the potential motifs for a lashing satire, Turco limits himself to a very gentle one. His aim is a playful mockery of an aspect of the culture which goes against the rules of the game of any festivity: the triumph of love, as it is well expressed by the unlearned but quick-witted common sense of Anichino who retorts to the tutor's radical anti-feminism:

Se non fossero state donne al mondo, da qual buco  
saresti uscito voi, domine? 88

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87. Aenella, II.4. 2-5.

88. Ibid., II.4. 37-8.



And it is this meaning which also brings into relief the author's touch of irony towards the other cultural misogynist, Lelio, and his comic lack of consistency: at the end of his Senecian diatribes he comes up with the only piece of advice that his love-sick friend is ready to accept: the one recommended by sexual instinct:

La maggior pazzia, che possa far l'huomo, parmi  
che sia a volersi doler inanzi tempo, perche molte  
volte si sogliono pianger i figliuoli per morti, e  
perduti, che in un momento si racquistano. Assai  
tempo havrai da piangere. [...] ma, se tu sei savio, non  
occurrerà venir a cio, perche, andando a ragionar  
seco questa notte, se non saprai commodar le cose,  
che stiano bene, la colpa è tua. 89

It is a suggestion reinforced without any euphemism by the servant Stilpone:

Menate le man basse, padrone.<sup>90</sup>

Beyond the use of the arguments in favour of or against love for comic purposes, it is relevant to notice that the questions are not haphazardly introduced. They approach love with the same secular point of view which characterize the prologue. In both parts of the play and in keeping with the insouciant and frivolous occasion of the entertainment, love is not discussed in relation to a conflict between the spirit and the flesh. This antithesis which is present in the neo-platonic approach to love in the sixteenth century is totally neglected, and no expression in love discourses betray the spiritual torments and moral sufferings of petrarchist poetry. Love is never opposed to lust, as a sin against the spirit.

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89. Arnella, III.5. 47-55. For the first part of the advice, see Seneca, Epistle, XIII (4): 'Plura sunt, iucili, quae nos terrent [...] quam re laboramus [...] Illud tibi praecipio, ne sis miser ante tempus, cum illa, quae velut imminetia expavisti, fortasse numquam ventura sint, certe non venerint'.

90. Ibid., III.5. 56.

It is only a sin against man's dignity and reason. There is never, for instance, as in Gli Asolani, a presentation of all the wrongs that love does to man's dignity, (libro I),<sup>91</sup> or a counter-attempt pointing out all its positive effects (libro II), followed by a reconciliation of the two themes through a concept of love which is both appeasement of the senses and of the spirit (libro III). Love is accepted and presented both by the young men in love and by the anti-lovers as a joy linked to the present, to the satisfaction of the senses, yet without the sensuality that inspires many of the lovers in those plays where the influence of the novellistica boccaccesca seems stronger.<sup>92</sup> Love is that described in the

Trattati d'amore:

amore è un fuoco invisibile, il quale, dagli occhi nel core acceso e dalla speranza del piacer in quello nutrito, ci impregna l'anima d'un desiderio di assicurarsi con la prova se tanta dolcezza nello amato si ritrova quanta Amore agli occhi ci dipinse; tal che giorno e notte in altro non pensiamo nè bene ci par sentire, finch'al desiato fine non siamo pervenuti. 93

Although expressed in a language which has lost all traces of the Dolce Stil Novo, this is the innocent concept of love which transpires on the lips of Marcio and Eugenio, and through their actions: the erotic description of the night encounter between Ricciardo and Caterina in Boccaccio's novella (V,4., one of the alleged sources), has been left out, and Eugenio's satisfaction with a kiss and with 'words' arouses the mocking disappointment of the accomplices:

La cosa va solo di parole sin'ora:<sup>94</sup>

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91. 'come se essi in Lete avessero la memoria tuffata, d'ogni altra cosa fatti dimentichi salvo che del lor male, ogni onesto ufficio, ogni studio lodevole, ogni onorata impresa, ogni lor debito lasciato a dietro', Bembo, Gli Asolani, I.xxiii in Prose e rime, p. 356.

92. De Amicis, p. 147.

93. Bartolomeo Gottifredi, Specchio d'amore (1547) in Trattati d'amore, p. 258.

94. Agnella, IV.7. 42.



It is a contentment with delicate restraint which is characteristic also of L'Alessandro where Cornelio stresses his complete joy while admitting that it has been a chaste encounter with his beloved.<sup>95</sup>

The ragionamento about the relation between love and marriage is widened by the second form of opposition to love, which is voiced by the fathers of Flavia and Marcio. The author does not brand this third set of double characters with a specific form of humour; he is neither sharply satirical towards their practical concept of love nor does he parody the two older men; the irony falls on their attitude indirectly because the happy conclusion proves that love triumphs over every obstacle and luck looks more favourably on constant and adventurous lovers than on down-to-earth arrangements at the expense of love. More in accordance with Terence than with Plautus,<sup>96</sup> they are treated with respect and enjoy a high reputation. They epitomize the traditional Latin fathers who, whether aware of it or not, are in opposition to their sons and this is their only role in the play; they exist through this function. As in the case of Menandro, this may be taken as a sign of the author's deliberate intention to limit them to single-featured characters so that their specific attitude to love is brought into stronger relief, which may be linked with another difference between Anella and L'Alessandro. In Piccolomini's play, the father, Costanzo, who opposes the son, is also involved in his own personal unsuccessful pursuit of Brigida, the wife of the Capitano, and this adds more

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95. Alessandro, IV.4.

96. Segal, pp. 16 ff. and pp. 25 ff.

buffoonery and irony to the play.<sup>97</sup> Turco's economy not only gives more evidence to the ragionamento of the fathers but also points out two different methods of characterization and two different aims. Complexity of character is achieved in L'Alessandro by casting two contrasting forms of behaviour within the same character, the interest of the author being in a richer comic humour. In Arne'lla, on the contrary, strength to the worn-out features of the traditional father is given by a juxtaposition of two similar figures, so that the result is not a better delineated character but a more distinct idea.

Emilio's firm and unsuspecting confidence in his own judgement and authority complements Agapito's emotional and authoritarian disregard for any opposition to his decisions. They also reciprocally emphasise each other's views because their speeches bring out the same business-like approach to marriage. The confrontation over marriage is also neither seen as a pedagogical issue, as Terence did in Heautontimorumenos and Adelphoe (an aspect of Terence more suitable for productions by schoolboys<sup>98</sup> than for an audience *which* was certainly aware of the financial importance of dowries in its own society),<sup>99</sup> nor is it painted as a fault of the greediness of the

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97. The same idea is present in Plautus, La Casina and in Machiavelli, La Clizia.

98. For a modern critical approach to this aspect in Terence, see 'Il problema pedagogico e il finale degli "Adelphoe"', Perelli, pp. 61 ff. Terence was appreciated for his educational value in particular in Ferrara in the 15th century, see Stäuble, op. cit. The pedagogical theme was also a characteristic interpretation of Northern Europe, Doran, pp. 160 ff.

99. See Francesco Tagliapietra's report to Venice (1567) expressing serious complaints about the impoverishment of the Bresciano caused by the too frequent marriages with foreigners and the excessively high dowries, Relazioni di Rettori, p. 105.

fathers, in spite of Marcio's outburst against the avarice of the old men (V.4.). The best example of Turco's thematic and comic economy is Emilio's speech with his wife which turns into a dispute about the girl's age.<sup>100</sup> In a similar scene in Gl'Ingannati, another play by the Sienese academics, in the dialogue between the girl's father and the balia, both a pathetic note is introduced (because of the awareness that the girl has nobody in the world to defend her against her father's cruel solution to marry her to a good old man with money) and a suggestive one (obtained with allusions to the old man's impotence (I.2.).

In Agnella the conflict is not only a generation gap between the fertile imagination of the young and the prosaic and unimaginative staunchness of the old ones:

Voi m'havete inteso. la torrà, se crepasse.  
altramente, lo farò il più mendico huomo di  
Pavia. Non voler tor una giovane così bella,  
e quel che importa più con tanti migliaia di  
ducati di dote? 101

It manifests itself also as a cultural conflict about the value of education and culture itself. To the sophisticated language full of literary reminiscences on which the young men rely to support their arguments and to analyse their feelings is opposed the dismissively brutal definition of the father:

N'incaco a Cicerone io: Cicerone non mi darà  
mai robba, se io non n'havrò. 102

The clash between Agapito the father and Menandro the tutor is the

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100. A scene which has some analogies with the famous argument about Juliet's age between the mother and the balia in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

101. Agnella, III.8. 77-81.

102. Ibid., III.8. 85-6.

moment of deepest humiliation for the pedant but it is also full of subtle irony against the old fathers: irony against a kind of culture which lards wisdom with sonorous quotations but also against that mentality which, confronted with a language it does not understand, defends itself with abuses and sarcasm:

Io non vi risponderò a quelli vostri Antichi,  
altro, se non che al dì d'hoggi, come si vuol dire  
che uno sia un scempiosi dice, Egli ha del antico,  
e si governa all'antica. 103

The themes and the comic spirit of the two romantic stories built through a technique of complementary juxtaposition are correlated to the burlesque love of Giannuccio, the Neapolitan scholar, and Lamia, the courtesan, through a technique of parodic counter-position. As said before when discussing the structure, the comic scenes of which Giannuccio is a protagonist are not inserted as loose episodes but form a parodic counter-plot to Eugenio's story. The significance of this character in relation to the amatory landscape of the play is described by Bolgia: Giannuccio is a love's buffoon and his vicissitudes are the penalty that Cupid imposes on his kind:

per la fede mia, che Amore si deve pur prender  
bel spasso di questi buffaloni. penso. che gli  
tenga per buffoni io. 104

And consequently, as a buffoon, he is the obvious target for a beffa. His love plight and pursuit of his courtesan act throughout, step-by-step, as a ridiculous counterpoint to Eugenio's. Eugenio's well-chosen go-between Agnella is balanced by Giannuccio's senseless choice of the parasite Bolgia who, in the quick-witted Chiappino's words:

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103. Agnella, III.8. 35-8.

104. Ibid., IV.1. 48-50.



Pur che gli dia ben da impir quel corpaccio di  
Lupo, gli prometterà anco di fargli haver la  
moglie del Prete Ianni. 105

Likewise Agnella's successful completion of her mission to the girl (II.5.), is balanced by Bolgia's successful arrangement with the courtesan to deceive the credulous Giannuccio (III.1.). His brave decision to challenge fortune and defy risks matches Eugenio's but his words sound pathetically comic because the danger he fears (Eugenio's rivalry) does not exist whereas he blindly walks into the trap laid for him by his counsellor and lover, the two people he blindly trusts (III.2.).

Not only the story but also the character stands out in contrast to Eugenio, because Giannuccio's art and style of wooing are a caricature of the 'decorous' lover. And, as in the case of the previous characters, Turco has highlighted the contextual value of the character by stripping Giannuccio of any other motif which is not strictly contrastable with the behaviour of the romantic young men.

Only his Neapolitan idiom links him with Ligdonio, the progenitor of the Neapolitan speaking lovers of the sixteenth-century comedy.<sup>106</sup> Unlike Piccolomini's character his old age is not a source of comedy, his passion is not contaminated by the attraction of a rich dowry, nor is he exploited by the author for easy laughs because the object of his desires already has a husband as in the novella by Straparola or in L'Alessandro where the comic situations are multiplied because Brigida, the object of Costanzo's desires, is married to a braggart Capitano.

He is the well-known catalyst of laughter mocked by Aretino.<sup>107</sup>

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105. Agnella, II.2. 33-5.

106. Alessandro Piccolomini, L'Amor Costante.

107. Aretino, Prologo to Il Marescalco.

His courtship to Lamia is as legitimate and disinterested as Eugenio's and Marcio's. As with them, the obstacle is a different social status. Lamia's preference for Eugenio is motivated by his higher social class, exactly as Flavia is a gentildonna of a noble family (I.2.) and Eugenio only an adopted son; Marcio is 'nobile, e ricco [...] leggiadro, costumato, e si diletta parimente de' studi nobili',<sup>108</sup> while Olinda is thought of as being 'di vil condizione'.<sup>109</sup> There is nothing despicable in his character, he is affectionate to his young servant Chiappino. In his own comic way he is deeply in love with Lamia. Both Chiappino and Bolgia easily provoke his despair and his joy (II.2.) because of it, and his voluptuousness and ardours have the naiveté of a child:

O che basocci, che le voglio dare.<sup>110</sup>

Giannuccio's speeches are neither a combination of boasts about poetic achievements nor about war feats;<sup>111</sup> he is not a braggart of love, he is love's clown. He is a comic homage to the Renaissance sense of decorum which was a cornerstone of Renaissance society strongly mirrored in the literary tradition. As a caricature of the perfect lover he is indebted to Ovid. He is the dramatization of Ovid's idiot, of the 'mentis inops' who goes against the precepts of his Ars Amatoria. And on two violations of those rules are based two of the most grotesque mishaps the poor man incurs in the play.

Ovid warns that the intelligent lover should not deck himself up, that he should not be excessively careful about his external

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108. Annella, I.3. 74-6.

109. Ibid., I.4. 19.

110. Ibid., III.2. 35.

111. For a detailed description of the figure of the Neapolitan in the Renaissance comedy, see Benedetto Croce, 'I toscani e la satira contro i Napoletani', Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane, 1898, XXIII, pp. 702-42 and Vittorio Viviani, Storia del teatro napoletano (Naples, 1969), ch. IV.

appearance because only a casual and natural beauty becomes men,<sup>112</sup> that he should above all be clean, have a well-groomed beard and fresh breath.<sup>113</sup> Naturally Giannuccio's first thoughts and preparations for the longed-for visit to Lamia are about perfumes as well as a bath:

boglio mannare Chiappino per aque nanfe, muschiate, e  
per zibetto, accio che chiu pozza piacer alla Ninfa:  
e anco sara buono, che io vada ala stufia. 114

Consequently, in the logic of comedy, as Eugenio's anxious preparations are dashed by the news of the incumbent marriage by Flavia (III.5.), so Giannuccio is frustrated in his attempt to have a bath with all the perfumes. He has only time to feast his eyes on all the scents brought for him before Chiappino stumbles, dropping them on the floor (III.9.). The full ironic impact of all these preparations comes to the fore later, after the beffa has been successful and Giannuccio's sensuous longing for elegance will be contrasted with his candour in admitting that he has soiled himself out of sheer terror:

Mi s'accapricciano i peli, solo a pensare lo granne  
pericolo, in che io songo inciampato, quanno ero nel  
chiù bello del piacer con la Signora mea [...]  
Cierto cha io ti iuro, che à granne fatica me ne  
potei rattenere, cha non mi cacasse di fuori le calze;  
e pure allo fine la paura potè chiù di me. 115

Another Ovidian exhortation to the young Roman lovers is to learn the liberal disciplines in order to seduce the girls through eloquence followed by the warning that lovers however should not parade learning because only a fool would do that:

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112. Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I. 505-9.

113. Ibid., I. 513-24.

114. Agnella, III.3. 77-81. The need for perfumes and scents is a source of comedy against the old buffoon-lover's stinginess in Gl'Innammati, by the Accademici Intronati, II.4.

115. Agnella, V.1. 24-40.

Quis, nisi mentis inops, tenerae declamat amicae?<sup>116</sup>

And sheer bad luck once more conspires against the Neapolitan so that in his first speech of love with Lamia and in his first appearance on the stage he unwittingly proclaims himself insane. When the woman shows herself at the window Giannuccio 'casual y' drops, 'Il Furioso di Messer Lodovico Ariosto',<sup>117</sup> in an attempt to pay her a compliment and recites the first page that chance opens for him: all the insults that Rodomonte at the climax of his fury utters against women, which are not only comically incongruous, but also highly ironic because, as no doubt the audience knew, Ariosto proceeds adding:

certo da ragion si dipartiva.<sup>118</sup>

But while he is clownish in his amatory techniques, his motivations are the same as those of the two romantic lovers. His behaviour, like that of the young lovers, epitomizes the ungovernable nature of love. Like Eugenio and Marcio he throws himself into troubles because he is in love. An examination of Giannuccio's first love soliloquy, with Chiappino as patient listener, shows that it is a parody of Marcio's and Eugenio's speeches. He defends the strength of his love on account of his fidelity as Eugenio does, but he can't claim a year as the young lover:

che gia un' anno [sic] m'accesi ardentissimamente;<sup>119</sup>  
he claims a fortnight:

e songo homai chiu di quindici giourni, che io servo  
à quissa Signora crudele, e ingrata. 120

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116. Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I. 465.

117. Agnella, I.1. 58.

118. Orlando Furioso, XXVII, 121.

119. Agnella, I.2. 6-7.

120. Ibid., I.1. 14-5.



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Like Eugenio he feels the uselessness of his constancy and of his credentials as,

songo cosi rade quille, che mi songo scampate dalle mani;<sup>121</sup>  
and above all:

Io songo pure chiu bello di lui, chiu nobile, chiu  
galante, e chiu ricco, che importa chiu. 122

Giannuccio's comic value is thus triple: his story is a comic counterpoint to Eugenio's, he is a caricature of the decorous lover and the 'friendship' between him and Bolgia is a parody of the idea of friendship as described and personified by Eugenio and Lelio.

The link between Giannuccio and Bolgia, apart from strengthening Giannuccio's parodic value, is also interesting because it suggests that it may have been inspired by an interpretation of Cicero of the relation Gnato - Thraso in Terence's Eunuchus and then rearranged as a parodic counterposition to the serious motif of friendship in Agnella. The essence of Eugenio's speech on friendship is that its validity may be tested through the good advice given in time of need (I.1). Cicerone in his De Amicitia, to which, as we saw in analysing the young lovers' speeches, Turco was indebted, illustrates a fawning friendship through the example of Gnato and Thraso, Gnato being a flatterer hence a bad counsellor. Giannuccio's rashness in welcoming Bolgia among his friends<sup>123</sup> obviously contrasts with Eugenio's over-caution but becomes a source of ironic mockery when on the point of being beffato by Bolgia, he warmly thanks him:

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121. Agnella, I.1. 12-13.

122. Ibid., I.1. 82-4.

123. Ibid., II.2. 50-2.

quanno ti pararò mai l'obbligo, che ti tiengo,  
lo meo Bolgia da bene? 124

And he steps further into burlesque when, in order to overcome the emotion for the approaching love encounter, he asks Bolgia's support:

No poristi un poco venir ancora tu con isso  
meo, Bolgia? 125

Thus though not interwoven into the action of the romantic plots, (as we saw the stories run separately), the burlesque plot is thematically and comically linked with the serious ones. It is furthermore important that the comic humour characterizing Giannuccio's story does not only hit the buffoon of love, but projects itself also on to the romantic love affairs, infecting them with a teasing humour: though in different ways the play shows that love cannot be ruled, that Giannuccio's description of it - *infine Amore tira chiu che cento paia de' boi*<sup>126</sup> - , is valid also for the decorous lovers, and in the end love rewards the clown as well as the serious ones and Giannuccio can enjoy the whiteness of Iamia's flesh which previously, as a lover rendered hyper-perceptive through passion, he had claimed to have seen through her dresses.<sup>127</sup>

The framework of antitheses and parallelism is completed with the burlesque love episodes of Bolgia, the parasite, and Stilpone, the servant braggart. They are, as it were, the third on a scale of decorum, moving away from the standard of courtly love. Amidst the numerous hilarious episodes which are scattered through the play, comically enlivening the amorous tension of the main story,

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124. Agnella, IV, l. 10-11.

125. Ibid., 38-9.

126. Ibid., I, l. 30-1.

127. Ibid., V, 9. 37; for the same effect, see Orlando Furioso, I. 56.

and emphasising the tone of unproblematic mirthfulness which pervades Agnella, a play for a festive occasion, the love endeavours of Stilpone and Bolgia to win the favour of the coquettish young Clitia stand out as another parodic love story.

Both the braggart and the parasite are, like Giannuccio, caricatures of the perfect lover, but contrary to Giannuccio, they are comically unashamed of it. They form a contrast with the previous three lovers because to their beliefs in faithfulness, and long lasting passions, they oppose their speedy courtship, their search for immediate remunerative pleasure, their joy in a stolen kiss, and in the pretended abuses of the girl:

Io son contento, che tu mi percuota, e che facci ciò  
che vuoi, pur che mi lasci bacciar un trattarello quella  
tua boccuccia più saporita, che un [sic] ala di Cappone  
[...] Io la bacierò, se vuoi, e se non vuoi. Oh, vedi,  
ch'io t'ho baciata, e bacierò di bel novc. 128

The readiness of Giannuccio, Marcio and Eugenio to defy dangers and perils, is contrasted with their self-deprecating boasts,<sup>129</sup> and their swift surrenders:

Io sono cōtento di far ciò che volete per due cagioni:  
perche [...] io non sono del parer di questi civettini,  
che sogliono render le ferite, e le bastonate, à coloro,  
che glie l'hanno dato, come se fossero cose, che si  
prestassero. 130

In comparison with the other three lovers there is also almost a reduction in scale in the dangers they face. Marcio and Eugenio confronted the fearsome fathers, Giannuccio a non-existent rival,

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128. Agnella, II.3. 39-46.

129. Ibid., III.3.4.

130. Ibid., II.3. 71-6.

but Bolgia and Stilpone confront each other. The only battle of love in the play is theirs; it is the braggart who humorously admits that his boasts serve to build up his courage (1.4.) who defeats an equally courageous parasite.

These love vignettes, which are among the most entertaining and spontaneously joyful of the play, portray love a step further away than Giannuccio from courtly love. But this attitude to love, too, is represented strictly in compliance with the courtly literary tradition, without any interest in a more deeply realistic characterization. Turco's witty smile is for the free and easy way to enjoy love without moral worries, for the amorous malizia popolareggiante, the uncouthness of their amatory expressions, and salacious wit of the dialogues:

Io ti vidi l'altr'hieri le gambe al Tesino,  
lavando, cosi belle, e tanto bianche, ch'io  
rimasi morto di te. 131

It is reminiscent of the jestful smile with which the fifteenth-century courtly refined audience of the De' Medici enjoyed the half-literary, half-rustic praises of the peasant Vallera to his Nencia.

The tableau of love is given its finishing touch with the sketches of feminine love. The author's comic mockery of the masculine misogynist forces is intensified by his playful criticism

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131. Agnella, III.3. 35-8; see also Bolgia's comparison of Clitia's tastiness with a chicken's wing, just quoted, with Vallera's, 'piu chiara se' che acqua di fontana, / e se' piu' dolce che la malvaglia; / quando ti sguardo da sera o mattina / piu' bianca se' che il fior della farina, 'Lorenzo D. Medici, Nencia da Barberino, (according to the vulgata) ed. cit. 6. 5-8., p. 137.

of the traditional belief that women's love is more shy and less ardent than that of men.

The four women of this play are given even less action than the men; they are the protagonists of only a few episodes. Yet the portraits of Agnella, the procuress, Flavia, the gentlewoman, Lamia, the courtesan and Clitia, the young servant, are among the most vividly drawn in this play and their scenes among the most delightful. Their message of love is univocal. Among them there is no 'nemica d'amor'. Their attraction to love is similarly felt by the old Agnella, by the 'decorous' Flavia, by the young, knowing servant, Clitia. Neither age nor social status is an obstacle. They welcome love with a joyous tone, an unhidden willingness to enjoy its pleasures, a sense of erotic desire which transpires through their words and their smiles. The coldness of the long love speeches of the young men contrast with the spontaneous suggestive silences and swift smiles of the women. It is a smile which betrays Flavia's secret passion for Eugenio to the affectionate knowing eyes of Agnella,<sup>132</sup> despite the girl's pretended indifference to the young man's letters:<sup>133</sup> it is with a quick laugh that the coquettish Clitia betrays her satisfaction at Stilpone's approaches despite her threats:

tu ridi. eh, sia benedetta quella boccuccia  
così bella. 134

Though, unlike men, women present a common attitude towards love,

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132. Agnella, II.5. 50.

133. Ibid., II.5. 38-42.

134. Ibid., III.3. 34-5.

135. Agnella, II.3. 18.



they too are differentiated according to the rules of decorum thus forming a counterpart with their respective male counterpart.

In Clitia, 'bona robbicciuola',<sup>135</sup> there is the same open scanzonata attitude as in Stilpone and Bolgia, and the same lack of shyness. Coquettish interest and cheeky sensuality peep through her reports of the intimate conversations she heard from other servants of her age bent over needles and other domestic work (II.3.). And the author reveals his teasing understanding of this lively girl, presenting her as the least conventional and most original figure of the whole play.

More stereotyped is Lamia, the courtesan: her gestures are more traditional: her self-styled nobility (which recalls Giannuccio), the book dropped from the window, and her immediate response to the prospect of a beffa on Giannuccio. However, though she does not scorn money (III.1.), this aspect does not overshadow the spirito da beffa which links her to Giannuccio's misadventures for which she, with Bolgia, is responsible. Her portrait is not that of the hetaera in whose soul avidity has killed all feelings. No moral negative judgement is passed on her by the author and the audience transfers to her the same joking admiration usually given to the shrewd trickster of a successful burla. Lamia is the trickster of the burla against the <sup>victim</sup> foolish of love and the laughter <sup>directed against</sup> is the fool not the woman who has astutely cheated him.

The key scene of the play which unlocks the puzzling meaning of the title is the encounter between Agnella and Flavia. Their two speeches carefully respect the rules of decorum. To a young woman of a noble family it is becoming to make the immediate sharp

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135. Agnella, II.3. 18.

refusal to Agnella's proposal, the sharp rebuke, the silent smile of consent and only a modest kiss at the end; but through the distinction and the refinement of the character there peeps, with exquisite irony, the same ardour and the same desire for love of the servetta, Clitia. Likewise her arguing with Agnella and Agnella's monologue are contrasted with the young lovers' debates and those of their advisers. But with expressive irony the discussion between the young girl and her adviser sees the victory of the procuress who is the only one of the three advisers who is innocent of misogyny.

Moreover the speeches of Agnella strongly recall, in their content and their tone, one of the most famous treatises of love of the sixteenth century, La Raffaella, Dialogo de la bella creanza delle donne by Alessandro Piccolomini (1539). It is a reminder that this comedy was written under the impulse of that 'atteggiamento culturale colloquiale' which inspired 'quella trattatistica d'amore di tono minore, che, declinando dall'alta speculazione per diventare fatto di moda e di costume, percorre tutto il Cinquecento,'<sup>136</sup> which gives further evidence about the courtly nature of this comedy: as the lovers' speeches dealt with themes which, as indicated by Bandello himself, were not only meant to be read but also to be discussed by 'onesta e gentilissima brigata [where] si ragionava per via di diporto di molte cose, come in simil compagnia e costume di fare'.<sup>137</sup> Likewise Agnella's opinions are those of a genre, such as the Dialogo, which stands between the narrative and the dramatic and which is written by an accademico for a public not

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136. Altieri, 'Appunti sulla lingua della commedia del '500', p. 258.

137. Bandello, Novella, XLV. I.I. p. 525.

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dissimilar from the one who applauded Turco's comedy.<sup>138</sup>

The two teachers - Agnella and Margherita - are very similar. Unlike their counterparts in other plays of the period, they are both pleasant, and both display a 'finezza dialettica' and leave out coarse, licentious and obscene words.<sup>139</sup> Like Margherita, Agnella is not outstandingly greedy, contemptuous towards her victim, nor vulgar in the presentation of her views. Both women conquer the young girls' coyness thanks to their knowledge of feminine nature. And significantly their technique follows step-by-step the procedure by Ovid in Ars Amatoria.<sup>140</sup> They play on the surprise of the two girls at the pleasure they feel at being induced to yield and accept love.<sup>141</sup> They use plain, easy, everyday words - more reminiscent of literary traditions in Agnella,<sup>142</sup> with more concrete everyday details by Margherita,

E amore poi che val senza 'l suo fine? Quel  
ch'è l'uovo senza 'l sale, e peggio. 143

Certainly there is no trace of the lofty, stiff, literary language of the young men, and the tutor.

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138. 'Più che un dialogo la direi una commedia minima, poichè l'elemento comico vi soverchia felicemente quello trattatistico', Diego Valeri, 'Introduzione' to La Raffaella. Dialogo de la bella creanza de le donne (Florence, 1944) p. 10.

139. Valeri sees the originality of Piccolomini's character in the 'finezza dialettica' of the woman and in the absence of 'grossi e grassi, smaccati e sconci' speeches, *ibid.*, p. 14.

140. Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I. 365 ff. Lelio's advice to Eugenio about the need for an expert procuress as a first step to conquer a woman is also taken from Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I. 351.

141. Agnella, II.5.; Piccolomini, La Raffaella.

142. For the lover's curse against dawn, Agnella, II.1. 21-2; Ovid, Amores, I.viii. Porre la sella [...] starebbono in campo [...] caminano, Agnella, II.1.16-20; Aretino, Sei giornate, Ragionamento della Nanna e della Antonia (1534). Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa (1536), edited by Giovanni Aquilechia (Bari, 1969), II. p. 51; I: p. 16, I. p. 41.

143. Piccolomini, La Raffaella, p. 60.



The arguments used by the two procuresses belong to ancient and Renaissance tradition: love is to be enjoyed when young, beauty must not fade away uselessly, and it is not a sin to accept what can give pleasure. These are themes heralded in other comedies but what unites Piccolomini's and Turco's fantesche is the joyous serenity with which they perform their task of seductresses, and their cheerful firm belief that they bring happiness to the two girls. For example, Nicoletta in Piccolomini's L'Alessandro, (I.3.) makes the same attempt to persuade the young protagonist but she is not so enthusiastic about her task as Agnella is. In Agnella's words there is never a sad moment. She is not the Ovidian procuress of the Amores,<sup>144</sup> the first of the Aretinian Nannas. On her lips there appears a suggestive ironic smile, never complacent licentiousness.

Agnella and Margherita see a similar purpose in their work: they strive for the satisfaction of woman's erotic nature. Agnella protests with vigour and vehemence against men who prevent women from enjoying the same pleasures they grant to themselves; she cries out that women should be even more entitled than men to enjoy love because nature has made them more suitable than men. Likewise Piccolomini ironically dedicates his work to those women against whom 'gli uomini fuor di ogni ragione e tirannicamente hanno ordinato leggi, volendo che una medesima cosa a le donne sia vituperosissima ed a loro sia onore e grandezza'.<sup>145</sup>

The request for the sexual liberation of women is presented by Carlo Turco neither with encouragement nor with indirect criticism

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144. Ovid, Amores, I.viii.

145. Agnella, II.5; Piccolomini, La Raffaella, p. 36.

even if he puts it on the lips of a procuress.<sup>146</sup> His ironic smile hits out at the contradictions of women's traditional attitude which is to dissemble their erotic desire under a cover of shyness, as Apollo chides in the prologue to the play, while, on the contrary, they are anxious to be tempted and to yield to the point that - as the title says - it is the woman herself who is the seducer while she pretends to be the seduced.

of the author which could be presented only in a festive occasion as Benbo said about the content of his plays.

The metaphor of the lamb, victim of the male seducer, is not unusual in literature. Ovid uses the image in the *Art of Love*, 'ad molles lapa tendit oves',<sup>1</sup> comparing the women of Sabine during the abduction to the lamb fleeing in front of the wolf. But here the meaning is reversed. The author himself says in the *Art of Love*:

*L'Amorosa, bella pupa di una buona femina,  
che detta quel nome e non va in sua parte del  
suo.*

It is an ambiguous sentence which seems to have the following meaning: Amorella, the procuress, is by name pure and innocent but in reality her role is that of the corruptor traditionally assigned to men. This ambiguity is also stressed by Belgie at the end of the comedy. In opposition to the Petrarchan idea of the woman which passes through Mercio's and Amorella's speeches, Belgie, with

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146. For a comprehensive summary of the attitude towards women throughout the centuries, see Zonta, 'Avvertenza generale del curatore', in Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna, pp. 373 ff.

1. *Amorosa, Amorella*, 61-3.

## The Title

The contradiction between appearance and reality in women is epitomized in the allusiveness of the title. 'Agnella' is both the title and the name of the procuress. It is in the contradiction between this name, which is both in the pagan and the Christian tradition a symbol of innocence, purity, meekness and the profession of the woman, that <sup>lies</sup> the meaning of the play <sup>the</sup> the jesting message of the author which could be presented only on a festive occasion as Bembo said about the content of his Stanze.<sup>1</sup>

The metaphor of the lamb, victim of the male seducer, is not unusual in literature. Ovid uses the image in the Ars Amatoria, 'ad multas lupa tendit oves',<sup>2</sup> comparing the women of Sabina during the abduction to the lamb fleeing in front of the wolf. But here the meaning is reversed. The author himself says in the Arcoamento:

l'Agnella, dalla purità di una buona femina,  
che sotto quel nome conserva la sua parte del  
maschio. 3

It is an ambiguous sentence which seems to have the following meaning: Agnella, the procuress, is by name pure and innocent but in reality her role is that of the corruptor traditionally assigned to man. This ambiguity is also stressed by Bolgia at the end of the comedy. In opposition to the Petrarchan image of the woman which gleams through Marcio's and Eugenio's speeches, Bolgia, with

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1. See ch. 'Agnella The Theme of Love', n.l.
  2. Ars Amatoria, III. 419. See also, Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, 8.76. There are no indications of the opposite meaning in the massively documented work by L. Charbonneau-Lassay, Le Bestiaire du Christ (Bruges, 1940).
  3. Agnella, Arcoamento, 61-3.

outspoken salaciousness, ends his long speech addressin the women of the public and wondering:

Ma, chi crederebbe, a mirarvi sì bello, che parate  
Angeli, che poi foste così ghiotte nel maneggiarvi? 4

Perhaps Turco's playful intention was to suggest that every woman is a male seducer disguised as a lamb, and that every woman is capable of loving with the same transport as men, agreeing once more with Ovid that:

Prima tuae menti veniat fiducia, cunctas/Posse  
capi; capies, tu modo tende plagas/. Vere prius volucres  
taceant, aestate cicadae/Naenalius lepori det sua terga  
canis,/ Femina quam iuveni blande temptata repugnet/Haec  
quoque, quam poteris credere nolle, volet./  
Utque viro furtiva Venus, sic grata puellae:/  
vir male dissimulat, tectius illa cupit./ 5

4. Agnella, V.6. 48-51.

5. Ovid, Ars Amatoria, I. 269-76. See also the opinion of the anonymous author of La Venexiana: 'Et non ve immaginate altrimenti donne, se non quanto le vederete vestite, che poi spoliato siano non amande, ma amanti insieme cun voi', Prologo.

## A Multilingual Comedy

It has been stated before, and seen in the examination of the play, that the use of forms of plurilinguism in Agnella does not indicate a search for realism nor an interest in local language. Its origin lies in the concept that discord of sounds in a language is a source of comedy. Carlo Turco's agreement with this view links him once again to the production of the Accademici Intronati who produced their characteristic 'cromatismo linguistico'<sup>1</sup> because of 'quel diletto, che suole apportare in scena la diversità delle lingue'.<sup>2</sup>

The Neapolitan language of Giannuccio is the same Neapolitan spoken by Ligdonio, the first Neapolitan figure in sixteenth-century comedy, in Piccolomini's L'Amor Costante. There is no attempt to reproduce a real vernacular. It is an imitation introduced exclusively for humorous and clownish purposes which springs from the parody of those sounds which are more easily mimicked and which sound cacophonous to a 'Tuscan' ear. It is the Neapolitan mimicked by a Northerner who finds laughable the strong bilabial b, the emphatic sound of the double nn and the repeated use of the superlative form chIU:

Io songo pure chiu bello di lui, chiu nobile, chiu galante, e chiu ricco, che importa chiu. 3

The search for a linguistic humour ends with the phonetic

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1. Borsellino, 'Introduzione' to Commedie del Cinquecento, I, p. xxx.
  2. Alessandro Piccolomini, Ortensio, Prologo, in Commedie del Cinquecento, edited by Borlenghi, I.
  3. Agnella, I.1. 80-2.



parody. The vocabulary of Giannuccio is not more expressive or richer than the love language of the two young lovers. Like theirs it is an idiom which shows little imagination, and which is certainly not characterized by an abundance of words or regional expressions which seem to spring from a genuinely living idiom. The syntax is as 'literary' and artificial as that of the Italian spoken by the characters of I Gelosi, though, on rare occasions, fun is introduced with some proverbial sentences: 'Infine Amore tira chiu che cento paia de' boi'.<sup>4</sup>

As for the Spanish spoken by Brandonio, his very short speeches provide fun merely because they introduce non-Italian sounds and because of the Italianisms contaminating it. Indeed, contrary to the Renaissance comedy tradition, Brandonio is not even mocked as a braggart, nor is he a target for political satire;<sup>5</sup> on the contrary, he has occasionally even words of wisdom.

The only possible sign of an interest in the local dialect is provided by the sentences of the facchino. The part of this character is very short so that it is a difficult task to attempt to establish whether instead of the traditional Bergamask of the facchino, he speaks the dialect of Asola, which at the time, may have been a combination of Brescian and Bergamask.<sup>6</sup> But, even if

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4. Agnella, I.1. 30-1.

5. This is the purpose for which Piccolomini introduces him in L'Amor Costante. For a detailed view of the development of this character in Renaissance comedy, see Pietro Spezzani, L'arte rappresentativa di Andrea Perrucci e la lingua della Commedia dell'Arte in Lingua e Strutture del teatro italiano nel '500, pp. 387 n., 40 and 395 n., 51.

6. The forms 'per de, paregh, (Agnella, IV.4.) are indicated as Brescian forms in Antonio Tiraboschi, Vocabolario dei dialetti bergamaschi antichi e moderni (Bergamo, 1873). Other forms recall the Bergamask of the facchino in La Venexiana.

this were the case, it would but give more evidence of a snobbish attitude towards the local language. Its use in this play is in fact exclusively farcical because of the uncouth and buffoonish role given to the character, and because of the role of victim he has been destined to.<sup>7</sup>

Carlo Turco's plurilinguistic comedy indicates that towards the middle of the century, Brescia too, participated in the national search for new linguistic comic instruments. His choice of two distinct forms of language, though imitated from other playwrights, is coherent with the physiognomy and comic nature of his play. In order to stage ragionamenti d'amore, the language had to be the literary Italian consecrated by Bembo. Juxtaposed to this language there had to be a parodic idiom (the dialects) comically coherent with the ridiculous action and characters of the sub-plots.

A further linguistic solution deriving evidently from a stronger dissatisfaction with the theatrical value of literary Italian, was tried by our third Brescian playwright, Ludovico Fenarolo. In Il Sergio written in 1558, the literary idiom which Vincenzo Gabiani had accepted from Bembo and adopted for his play, ten years before, is almost totally rejected. In his search for a language which he wanted to be verisimilar as well as a comic instrument, Fenarolo turned to the vernacular: but he did not choose his own local dialect. He used the Veneto and the Bergamask, or Bergamasco, two dialects which were spoken in two bordering territories, and, what is most important, by then, had been frequently used on the stage by comic dramatists.

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7. In the 16th century comic production, the role of the Bergamasco is either that of the trickster or of the target for a burla. This character is presented in detail in the ch. 'Il Sergio. Bigolo' of this thesis.

IL SERGIO by Ludovico Fenarolo

Il Sergio is certainly the most entertaining and cheerful of the three Brescian plays examined here. Giovanni Casati in his dictionary describes it as 'plautiana sic', con dialetto bergamasco e veneto, non onesta'.<sup>1</sup> But it is Plautine only in the sense that it includes those motifs and episodes which by the middle of the sixteenth century had been absorbed both into the Italian<sup>2</sup> and the multi-dialect comic production.<sup>3</sup>

In fact Il Sergio is the only one of the three Brescian comedies to be an offspring of the sixteenth century Veneto theatre thus being evidence that the theatrical features of the plays by Andrea Calmo and Artemio Giancarli penetrated also in the Lombard area of the Terraferma and that the Serenissima influenced the Brescian theatre artistically as well as 'politically'; it is a rapport which has been illustrated in the first part of this work.

The action of the play and its comic spirit centre around the endeavours of the old Venetian merchant, Gioppo, to conquer a Greek widow, Alessandra; arising also from the amorous whims of the mature Venetian bravo Taramoto for Gioppo's wife and from the burle that the Bergamasque servant, Bigolo, and the Venetian procuress, Lazarina,

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1. III, p. 38.

2. The episode of the old adulterer tricked by the servant to disguise himself and ending up with a sound beating by a man disguised as a sweetheart, Casina, IV. 4 ; the servant telling the episode to the audience, Casina, V. 2.; the quarrel between the wife and the unfaithful husband, Amphitryon, and Asinaria V. 2.; the son's theft from the father to finance his secret love affair, Epidicus II, 1.

3. For the influence of the Latin comedy on Calmo, see Vittorio Rossi, 'Introduzione' to Lettere di Andrea Calmo (Turin, 1888), pp. lvi-lx. For Giancarli, see Cibotto, 'Introduzione' to Teatro Veneto, p. liv.



organize against the two old men in order to earn some money, to have some fun and also to cure them of their unseemly passion.

Though the vicissitudes of these characters occasionally intertwine with the stories of two couples of young lovers, the artistic, comic and dramatic value of Il Sergio hinges on the sprightly gaiety with which the group of characters speaking in dialect participates in Gioppo's 'novecento desgratie' (IV. 9. 1), on the jovial indulgence with which Gioppo is treated, and on the pervasive irony with which the merchant observes and comments on his own situation.<sup>4</sup> The resulting humorous vein is similar to that of the plays of Andrea Calmo and Artemio Giancarli, and not to the disparaging and harsh jesting tone with which Plautus and the 'Tuscan' Machiavelli treat their elderly lovers.

Il Sergio is also linked to the Veneto theatre because of the vernacular-speaking characters. Gioppo, the old lover, and Bigolo, the Bergamask servant, are deeply akin to Pantalone de' Bisognosi and to the Zanni; a resemblance which is relevant because it places this comedy in the sphere of the relations between Calmo's production and the Commedia dell'Arte,<sup>5</sup> particularly in the light of a specific

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4. Particularly brisk are the answers given to the scolding wife, IV. 10.

5. Rossi, 'Introduzione' to Lettere, nn. lxxix. Valeri, 'Caratteri e valori del teatro comico', p. 22. Spezzani, 'L'arte rappresentativa di Andrea Perrucci e la lingua della Commedia dell'Arte', p. 394 n., 49. Vincenzo Russo, 'Contributo alla lettura del teatro pluridialeale cinquecentesco: Il Travaglia di Andra Calmo' (unpublished dissertation, 2 vols., University of Trieste, 1965-66), I p. 3 n., 3. Pandolfi, La Commedia dell'Arte. Storia e testo, I, pp. 30-5. There are also observations in the 19th century works of Lorenzo Stoppato, op. cit. and Michele Scherillo, op. cit. Further bibliographical information is given in the footnotes about each character.

reference to masked actors at the end of the play:

ho creduto fin'ad hora che le cose succedute  
in questa scena siano state vere e non finte,  
nietedimeno dal cader de la maschera d'uno di  
questi recitanti ho conosciuto che è stata una  
comedia, per mia fe bello inganno.<sup>6</sup>

But the element which strongly binds Il Sergio to the Veneto theatre is the same artistically essential and lively use of the dialects (Venetian and Bergamask) which, as in those plays by Calmo which are more indebted to the Latin production, softens and modifies the biting Plautine humour deriving from the episodes.

The reasons why Fenarolo makes his characters speak in dialect are basically those of Calmo. Fenarolo himself explains his intention to recreate the cosmopolitan atmosphere of sixteenth-century Venice in the introductory letter to Giovanni Vergi:

essendo la Comedia imitazione e concorrendo in  
Venezia ov'ella è figurata, tante genti, e così varie  
nazioni.<sup>7</sup>

This statement is followed and made specific by one of the comic aims of the play:

essendo la dilettazone il fine delle Commedie de'  
nostri tempi, e di questi nostri Comici, io non la-  
sciando in tutto adietro quelle cose che sogliono  
giovare, habbia procurata essa dilettazone con ogn'  
altro modo che con quello delle parole scostumate e  
delle operazioni dissolute.<sup>8</sup>

The relationship between language and comic force was a strongly debated

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6. Il Sergio, V. 13. 40-4. D'Ancona places the first comedy with masked actors in 1556, II, p. 443.

7. Il Sergio, p. 2v.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 2v.

topic in the Renaissance,<sup>9</sup> together with the dispute in favour of or against the use of dialects.<sup>10</sup> Ruzzante argued in favour of regional languages in the name of a kind of art which would portray reality;<sup>11</sup> Calmo, for reasons very similar to those expressed by Fenarolo, that is to say, to give verisimilitude to the plot:

Vorrebbero costoro ch'un greco, o Dalmatino  
parlando in Italiano favellare, con gli accenti,  
e modi Toscani, il che non e men fuori del  
ordinario, che se un Bergamasco havesse a parlar  
Fiorentino, o un Napoletano in Tedesco [...].  
Nelle comedie desideriamo con ragionamenti consueti  
a ciascheduno far nascer l'allegrezza, il saporito  
riso, il giocondo plauso.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore the linguistic analysis of Il Sergio aims at answering the following questions: compared to the Veneto theatre of Calmo and Giancarli what did Fenarolo mean in practice by comic verisimilitude? Did he in fact consider the dialects the most suitable instruments to

9. Cesare Segre, 'Edonismo linguistico nel Cinquecento' and 'Polemica linguistica ed espressionismo dialettale nella letteratura italiana', in Lingua, stile e società (Milan, 1963), pp. 355-412. Paratore, pp. 70 ff.; for the difference in the linguistic humour of Plautus and Terence, see 'Lettera di Andrea Navagero a Giovanni Grolier' printed in front of the L'Andria e l'Eunucho (1544) pp. 3-4.
10. See above, the article by Paratore and for the discussions in the prologues which in the Renaissance acted as literary manifestos, see Goggio, pp. 331-4.
11. For his original request, see the prologues to the Piovana and La Fiorina. For a comment on the application of his theories, see Marisa Milani, 'Snaturalità e deformazione nella lingua teatrale del Ruzzante', in Lingua e strutture del teatro italiano del Rinascimento, Quaderni del Circolo Filologico Linguistico Padovano, N.2, with an introduction by Gianfranco Folena (Padova, 1970), p. III.
12. Prologo to Il Travaglia (Venice, 1561), pp. 2v-3. For a comment on the results achieved by Calmo and a comparison with Ruzzante, see Rossi, p. lxiv-lxviii. Cibotto, 'Introduzione' to Teatro Veneto, pp. xlviii ff. Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Ruzzante, Teatro, p. xxvi.

outline more subtly and to make more corporeal the profiles of the characters? Or did he adopt them to portray more tangibly the social background so that the characters would represent a specific society? Did Fenarolo therefore use languages which were really spoken in Venice around the middle of the sixteenth century or did he make use of stock expressions which belonged to the tradition of erudite comedy and gave them new life by translating them into a vernacular form?

To provide answers to these questions the language of each character expressing himself in Veneto<sup>13</sup> or in Bergamask has been examined so as to bring into relief the contribution of the dialect to the characterization, to assess the linguistic level of each character in relation to that of the others and to evaluate the degree of realism or, on the other hand, the degree of mannerism in relation to similar figures in Calmo and Giancarli.

A comparison with the grammatical description of the Veneto of the Lettere by Calmo with which the nineteenth-century scholar Vittorio Rossi has prefaced his edition and with the detailed notes on the Veneto<sup>14</sup> in the two unpublished editions of Il Travaglia and

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13. No precise distinction has been made between the Veneto spoken on the mainland and in the actual town of Venice for Calmo and Giancarli. Moreover exactly around the middle of the Cinquecento for political and social reasons the Venetian overshadowed the dialects of the inland, Giacomo Devoto and Gabriella Giacomelli, I dialetti delle regioni d'Italia (Florence, 1972). As the dialects are the most important element to assess the comedy in relation to the questions above-mentioned, this play will be examined only from a linguistic point of view with only sporadic reference to the plot. The registers of the four young lovers and the short part in Greek stradioto of Alessandra have also been omitted.
14. Rossi, 'Introduzione' to Lettere, p. cxvii: [nel] nostro autore la forma dialettale sintattica e logica dei discorsi dei vecchi è precisamente identica a quella delle lettere ora ristampate', Devoto and Giacomelli, pp. 33-6 and xvi-xviii for a short description of the historical relations between the Venetian and the Veneto in the 16th century and a bibliography.



La Potione<sup>15</sup> indicate that morphologically the Veneto spoken by Gioppo, Lazarina and Taramoto is that used by Calmo in his plays. Because the purpose of this research is a literary commentary, a detailed transcription of this comparison has been considered out of context. However the conclusion which has been reached is that the Veneto used by this Brescian author is authentic and not a pseudo-dialect; that it is not a caricature or a rough imitation of the most peculiar morphological aspects as in the case of the Neapolitan spoken by Giannuccio in Agnella; that the author, as it is stated in the prologue, wanted to give a semblance of reality to the story by means of linguistic authenticity.

The phonemics, the syntax and the vocabulary require an examination and a comment for each character.

1. There is no similarity with Gioppino, 'tipo caratteristico pad che maschera del teatro popolare bergamasco e bresciano. "Fante di tre pezzi, tradimento", rappresenta il popolano feroce, sanguinario, patriottico e religioso, servitor fedele, acuto osservatore ed arguto sentenziatore'. Il nuovo volto scientifico dell'... 1939.
  2. Migliorini and Chiappelli, p. 117. "La differenza della parola scritta per rimanere sulla pagina, la parola scritta per essere recitata serve di conservare inalterato, accanto al suo intrinseco valore sonoro, tutto il suo valore espressivo".
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15. Russo, op. cit. (unpublished dissertation), and M.F.Oriolo, 'Illustrazione de La Potione' (unpublished dissertation, University of Trieste, 1961-62).

Gioppo<sup>1</sup>

In Il Sergio, as in the Veneto plays, one of the basic assumptions of the author is the ~~theatrical~~ and literary value of sound, for he accepts the concept that 'la varietà delle forme elocutive si manifesta già nel modo di pronunciar [le]'.<sup>2</sup> As in Calmo's plays, 'appare chiaro che la sua comicità è soprattutto di parola; o meglio "era" allorchè quelle strane favelle suonavano sulle labbra sue e dei suoi compagni d'arte accompagnate e sostenute da una mimica che possiamo immaginare vivacissima'.<sup>3</sup> And indeed the naturally spoken nature of the Veneto, with its sing-song intonation runs through the comedy like a musical background.

Gioppo is the comically attractive and lively hero. The whole comedy is centered on his attempts to satisfy his amorous appetites. He belongs to that 'parabola d'elaborazione' which from the Plautine senex passes through Calmo, and Pantalone of the Commedia dell'Arte

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1. There is no similarity with Gioppino, 'tipo caratteristico più che maschera del teatro popolare bergamasco e bresciano. Munito di tre gozzi, tradizionali, rappresenta il popolano fine, sagace, patriotta e religioso, servitor fedele, acuto osservatore ed argomentatore sentenzioso', Il nuovo Melzi scientifico (Milan, 1953).
  2. Migliorini and Chiappelli, p. 212. 'A differenza della parola scritta per rimanere sulla pagina, la parola scritta per essere recitata esige di conservare inalterato, accanto al suo intrinseco valore poetico, tutto il suo potere comunicativo; impone, per così dire, all'autore la ricerca di un doppio valore, estetico e semantico a un tempo, in cui risiede appunto la vitalità scenica, quella che con giustificata tautologia si è ormai convenuto di chiamare la "teatralità" di un testo', Ludovico Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Farsa di Ranco e Tuogno e Beltrame (Padua, 1956, author unknown), p.xi
  3. Valeri, 'Caratteri e valori del teatro comico', p. 22.

to I rusteghi of Goldoni.<sup>4</sup>

Within this varied gallery Gioppo has his own individuality, his own physiognomy. He is endowed with and projects on the entire comedy the comic brio which enlivens not so much the old lovers of Calmo's plays as the author and protagonist of the Lettere of the Veneto playwright who is in fact an old man in love. Fenarolo borrows from this work what Ettore Bonora calls,

la facoltà che fu propria del Calmo di estrarre dalla vita contemporanea certi elementi di piccola commedia [...] la sorridente indulgenza nel descrivere ambienti e costumi [...]. L'estro pittoresco nel caricare le tinte, infine il piacere della cicolata amichevole cui molto giova la lingua in cui vennero dettate, un veneziano trattato con evidente gusto di contaminazioni letterarie.<sup>5</sup>

The Veneto he speaks is never used to create parody, nor to form a solo speech whose chief aim is to arouse laughter by playing on cacophonous sounds. The vernacular is only an instrument of communication with the other characters and by which other characters identify themselves and intimates sensations as well as the expression of ideas.

The condescension towards the dialects which was peculiar to Turco's portrait of the ridiculous lover has disappeared in the

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4. Rossi, 'Introduzione' to Lettere, pp. lxx-lxxv. Spezzani, 'L'arte rappresentativa di Andrea Perrucci e la lingua della Commedia dell'Arte', p.393, n., 49. Pietro Spezzani, 'Il primo repertorio linguistico di Pantalone', Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1961-62, tome CXX, pp. 549-577; of the same author 'Il linguaggio del Pantalone pregoldoniano', Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1962-63, tome CXXI. Luisa Rossato, 'Il linguaggio dei "Rusteghi" e il veneziano civile del Goldoni', Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 1961-62, tome CXX, pp. 579-641. Pandolfi, La Commedia dell'Arte. Storia e testo, I, pp. 298 ff.
5. Ettore Bonora, 'Il classicismo dal Bembo al Guarini', in Il Cinquecento. Storia della letteratura italiana. Collana edited by Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno (Milan, 1966), p. 384.

6. Il Sereno, I. 3, 22-4.

7. Ibid., I. 3, 23-8.

characterization of Gioppo.

Hence the rarity of all forms of phonetic parody, that is of emphasis on those phonemes of the vernacular which would have been more suitable to caricature; hence the moderate usage of alliteration, assonance, and paronomasia.

These rhetorical figures are sometimes created because certain words in dialect are onomatopoeically more expressive than the equivalent Italian words. However the outcome is never a mere lazzo, but an effect which delineates the various nuances of the two basic moods on which the old lover of this comedy is built. In the following protestation of love 'ò puta d'oro, ò puta maravegiosa, perche no hogio almanco un puoco dela so spuazza in boca da intertegnirme',<sup>6</sup> the prolonged sound of the hiatus and the sibilant consonant create onomatopoeic results which are more effective than the Italian equivalent 'sputo'; the repeated alliteration underlines the growing erotic excitement of the old man. Similarly the following alliteration based on a series of sibilants which have no correspondence in Italian, 'perche no hogio una de le so camise da spulesar, che faria pi carezze à i to puleseti, che no fa un de sti svegiai à sti satini de franza',<sup>7</sup> and which accompany Gioppo's day-dreams stress the caressing sound of his fingers while he dreams of the beloved widow. In both cases the onomatopoeia intensifies both the comic contrast between the amorous excitement and the not exactly aulic images which throng Gioppo's head.

Also the impatient persistent grumbling and the vexed mood against all the obstacles which oppose the fulfilment of his desires - from the lack of co-operation of the servants to the ailments of old age, are

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6. Il Sergio, I. 3. 22-4.

7. Ibid., I. 3. 25-8.



not expressed according to the conventional playing on sound which was already part of the language of Pantalone by the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The most common expressions comprising abusive epithets, caricaturing onomatology, and threats, whose hammering comic effect prevails on the lexical value, are almost absent in Gioppo.<sup>9</sup>

If a mixture of irritation and tenderness suggests to him the triple alliteration to describe the imaginary idlers molesting Panfilo and Camilla, the two 'doves' on whom he has set his eyes, 'certa caía de canagia da bon marcao';<sup>10</sup> or if an asyndeton makes his irritation sound more irritated, 'sfazzai, frontaizi, ruffiani, parassiti, adulatori, trionfa e sguazza';<sup>11</sup> or if a triple sequence of disyllabic words with paronomasia reinforces the content of his insults, 'tal poltron fachin gnorgnon',<sup>12</sup> these rhetorical devices never give the impression of witty conceits and symmetric sounds artificially constructed. The result is that the reactions of the old man always seem to arise spontaneously either from a transport of joyful love or from an outburst of rage against the hostile world of the young competitors.

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8. Spezzani, 'Il primo repertorio linguistico di Pantalone', p. 555 n., 9. See also Croce, 'Intorno alla Commedia dell'Arte', pp. 503-514.

9. Spezzani, 'Il linguaggio del pantalone pregoldoniano', pp. 655-9.

10. Il Sergio, I. 3. 97-8.

11. Ibid., II. 7. 25-6.

12. Ibid., I. 3. 64-5.

14. Carlo Goldoni, Memorie di Goldoni, edited by Filippo Gussalli (1954), p. 256.

15. Scudo, Prosa e Farsa, p. 111.

16. Il Sergio, I. 3. 9-11.

17. Alfieri, p. 277.

The sing-song nature of the Veneto has always been an object of favourable or adverse comments. Maffeo Venier used it to underline that 'la lengua veneziana sa d'ogni saor';<sup>13</sup> its pliability and softness were lovingly praised by Goldoni, 'le langage venitien [...] sans contredit le plus doux et le plus agréable de tous les autres dialectes de l'Italie',<sup>14</sup> while Bembo, with specific reference to the sounds, declared the inferiority of the Veneto, 'primieramente si veggono le toscane voci miglior suono avere, che non hanno le viniziane, più dolce, più vago, più ispedito, più vivo; nè elle tronche si vede che sieno e mancanti, come si può di buona parte delle nostre vedere, le quali niuna lettera raddoppiano giamai'.<sup>15</sup>

It is therefore even more significant for the evaluation of Fenarolo's use of the dialects in this comedy that the author has only rarely relied on this peculiarity so easily exploitable for comic purposes, even if this does not signify a complete departure from the literary comic tradition.

There is one case in which the grumbling of the old man is created by an assonance obtained by the analogy in the declination of two verbal forms (an analogy which does not exist in Italian), tuol - vuol: 'se ti i tuol sufficienti, ti i tuol ladri, ti i tuol male langue, e qualch'altra cosa de pezo, se ti i tuol grossi'.<sup>16</sup> It is an interesting case because the anaphora reminds us of one of those 'frammenti cristallizzati',<sup>17</sup> which probably derived from popular songs or frottole

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13. Giuseppe Boerio, Dizionario del dialetto veneziano (Venice, 1867), p. 600.

14. Carlo Goldoni, Memoires in Opere, edited by Filippo Zampieri (Milan, 1954), p. 256.

15. Bembo, Prose e rime, p. 111.

16. Il Sergio, I. 3. 9-11.

17. Altieri, p. 277.

where burlesque effects were usually obtained by the repetition of vowels and consonants; a 'popular' element which Vincenzo Russo has pointed out in Calmo<sup>18</sup> and which Maria Luisa Altieri finds more frequent than 'in altri autori di questi temi e di questi moduli, forse in corrispondenza di una maggiore disposizione dell'ambiente veneto all'assorbimento di poesia popolare locale'.<sup>19</sup> Equally isolated is the case of the assonance which provides a piece of 'comico del significante', that is, according to the explanation given by the author of this definition, 'una comicità ottenuta semplicemente con i suoni, essendo zero il significato'.<sup>20</sup> It is the verbal duel between Gioppo and the bravo Taramoto when Gioppo, furious with everything and everybody, competes with and even defeats Taramoto's verbosity:

Taramoto    O furfante, ò mariol, ò porco, ò zudio, ò castro=  
                  nazzo, o bècazzo.  
Gioppo        Che zanzeu?    che baieu?    che frapeu?    che fiabeu?<sup>21</sup>

As Fenarolo's spare and disguised use of rhetorical devices marks the superiority of Gioppo's language over Calmo's old man in love in Il Saltuzza, for instance, and in the scenari of the Commedia dell'Arte, so his syntax indicates the superiority of his vernacular over that of the old protagonists of Calmo's La Fiorina and Il Travaglia and makes his Veneto higher than the level of the Veneto of Lazarina and Taramoto. It is the 'spoken' syntax which conveys his loquacity, his amorous anxiety and the swift changes in mood - from moments of childish joy to moments of extreme irritation and frustration which underline his two basic thoughts: women and the passing of time.

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18. Russo, (unpublished dissertation), I. p. 33 and II. p. 23; reference to this comment are made by Altieri, p. 278.

19. Altieri, p. 278.

20. Ibid., p. 286.

21. Il Sergio, IV. 11. 20-2.

His talk is never characterized by a very simple protasis formed by a list of names, adjectives or verbs joined together by asyndeton or polysyndeton. And this differentiates his from the elocution of Calmo's old men. Both Melindo, the pale figure<sup>22</sup> of Il Saltuzza and the more lively Collofonio in Il Travaglia build their main monologues by piling up words connected mainly by parataxis. Melindo ranges from a series of abuses and a string of words describing sorrow, 'che l' no n'è pi gran dolor, affanno, desperation, tormento, travaglio, fastidio, passion, e angossa', to a list of objective clauses, 'che me dieba destiore, e che ormai el sol va a monte, e che 'l me manca la vertue' and to a series of attributes 'do buffali, ignoranti, invidiosi, maligni e gaioffi'.<sup>23</sup> It is a feature which characterizes his most important speech and is also repeated on other occasions.<sup>24</sup> The result is not only a more unrefined form of humour and a less subtle characterization but also poorer and thinner syntactical sentences so that the language outlines the character more as a type than as a representative of a defined social background. In Collofonio the words heaped up and juxtaposed are often verbal forms and this gives the impression of a more complex linguistic pattern - 'mortificando, e torcolando, e liquidando, e lambicando [...] che passa, che corre, che fuzze, che vola [...] che die haverle creature incorpoe, formae,

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22. Borlenghi, 'Introduzione' to Il Saltuzza, in Commedie del Cinquecento, II, p. 780.

23. Il Saltuzza, I. 3.

24. Ibid., II. 7: 'da farse in pioza, in cigogna, in serpente, in oselo, in niola, e in garzon [...] zo che importa la passion, el martello, l'amor, el fuoco, i sospiri, el tormento, el pensier'.

plasmae, e sigilae'<sup>25</sup> - but the excessive reliance on these word-games deprives the language of a 'spoken' intonation, removing the impression of a spontaneous ciacolar and fixes the level of his Veneto lower than that of Gioppo.

In Gioppo, also, in those cases where the paratactical syntax is more simple, the polysindeton is embedded among hypotactic sentences,<sup>26</sup> so that the difficulty of detecting them makes those parts sound just as colloquial. Moreover they never give, as in Calmo, the impression of an easy logorrhoea. On the contrary they give the sense of the uncertainty with which the speech often proceeds. In this way occasions when Gioppo displays 'un favelar ciceronian'<sup>27</sup> are interspersed with occasions where the broken, abrupt rhythm reflects a feeling of depression for the theft of his silver pieces, his angry breathing, and the contradictions of his thoughts, and doubts.

Even in these cases of a sequence of descriptive narrative in the infinitive mood the result is never so simple and elementary as to place the character in a low social category as is often the effect reached in Ruzzante;<sup>28</sup> the result is the reverse, it is popolareggiante, but filtered through the literary tradition of the filastrocche<sup>29</sup> as has been seen in the case of some phonetic rhetorical devices.<sup>30</sup>

25. Il Travaglia (Venice, 1561). I. 7; I. 10; I. 19.

26. Il Sergio, I. 3. 15, 21, 28, 31; III. 9. 6, 14, 40, 48.

27. Ibid., I. 9. 13.

28. Milani, pp. 113-4.

29. Il Sergio, IV. 1. 29-32; IV. 11. 2-7.

30. 'O, o, o, o, oime tristo mi, dolorao, strupiao, assassinao dal mondo, dalla fortuna, da i homeni, e da inganni, u u mogia parechiè un caeieto, che vogio andar à muar aiere, a lusenghiera, a truffadora Lionora, posso ben dir mors mea, vita tua', Il Travaglia. V.17. A comparison between one of these examples (the list of Gioppo's endless mishaps and the Plautine equivalent in Calmo's Il Travaglia) show how, even when the two authors model their style on the linguistic instruments of the comic tradition, their lexical and syntactical level places Collofonio on a comic and social level lower than that of Gioppo.



More emblematic of the way in which Fenarolo creates the spoken tone of Gioppo's syntax is the frequent transformation of a secondary clause into a primary sentence by substituting a secondary conjunction with a polysyndeton.<sup>31</sup> It is a valid stratagem because it reflects the psychological, anxious state of the old man who links the events according to the emotions which spontaneously overwhelm him.<sup>32</sup> The dissolution of the grammatical links of subordination in order to conceal the actual hypotaxis<sup>33</sup> is obtained, even if less frequently, by eliding the subordinate conjunction che after a declaratory clause,<sup>34</sup> or by omitting the verbum dicendi,<sup>35</sup> or by using the inversion as in the following case when, instead of the banal declaratory sentence, 'vi auguro che la merda vi sia in gola', there is a lively optative, 'e digo la merda che ve sia in la gola'.<sup>36</sup>

But the most successful tool used by Fenarolo to create a sintassi del parlato, by apparently breaking up the syntactical links, is the incidentale which, in Gioppo, corresponds to intercalari or to pet-phrases. It is very common<sup>37</sup> and its function is twofold and complementary. It not only makes the language colloquial but it also gives

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31. A frequent device in Aretino, see Mario Tonello, 'Lingua e polemica teatrale nella "Cortigiana" di Pietro Aretino', in Lingua e strutture del teatro italiano del Rinascimento, p. 221.

32. Il Sergio, II. 2. 16, 50; I. 3. 64, 98; II. 13. 17-21; III. 9. 10-15, 39-48.

33. The dissolution of the grammatical links is also frequently used by Aretino, see Tonello, pp. 216 ff.

34. Il Sergio, I. 2, I-3.

35. Ibid., III. 15. 55.

36. Ibid., IV. 12. 4.

37. Ibid., 'mo, ba diavolo, co diavolo, cancaro, niente de manco'.

a comically sententious tone to Gioppo's thoughts because the most frequent expression is rather egocentric: 'io dico, te voio dir, orsu'. This is a device which also places Gioppo in the linguistic tradition of Pantalone on whose lips assertive idioms have 'una funzione spiccata nel rilevare l'indole di Pantalone, talvolta decisa ed energica' and which are pointed out as frequent devices in three pre-Goldonian works: La Dispettosa Moglie (Venice, 1606), Il Pantalon Imbertonao (Venice, 1620) by Giovanni Briccio and Il Pantalon Spetier (Venice, 1703) by Giovanni Bonicelli.<sup>38</sup>

The pet-phrase, disguised under the form of an abuse, also present throughout the evolution of the veneto theatre,<sup>39</sup> in Gioppo is kept to a low profile. The exclamatory pet-phrases are not particularly colourful or strikingly vulgar and stand out only when they lose their function of intercalari and are uttered only under the impulse of frustrated irritation; they still give the old man a touch of good-heartedness, a result present also in Collofonio<sup>40</sup> in Il Travaglia. Also some adversative conjunctions such as 'ma, però, pur, tuttavia', have, in Gioppo's sentences, the effect of pet-phrases as he does not use them to contradict the previous sentence but as interjections continuously reflecting the typical grumbling and mumbling tone of Gioppo to himself, and his brooding in favour of or against his dreamed love affair so that the adversatives mark sudden

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38. Spezzani, 'Il linguaggio del Pantalone pregoldoniano' tome CXXI, p. 660 and pp. 704-5. The pet-phrase will be also present as a linguistic nervous tic in some plays by Goldoni, see Rossato p. 597.

39. Il Saltuzza, III, 1; Spezzani, 'Il linguaggio di Pantalone pregoldoniano' pp. 654-5.

40. Milani remarks that in Ruzzante too the effect is never of real swearing, p. 120. For the various abuses against the inefficient helpers, see Il Travaglia, II. 8 and Il Sergio, IV. 12.

comic insights into his secret and intimate thoughts.

To obtain the impression of instinctive natural dialogues and yet maintain the fairly educated level of his vernacular, Fenarolo avoids syntactical patterns where secondary clauses are rigidly organized around the main one, as well as rhetorical sequences of antitheses and parallelisms: for instance in a sentence like the following one - 'mi e son certo, che se sta cossa va avanti, la s'infriserà tanto in tol fato mio, che un zorno la vuol morir [...] e digo mo che da desperation, e da martelo la se lasserà sbasir',<sup>41</sup> the symmetry is once more broken by the inciso, by the prolepsis of the indirect object, and by the grammatically inappropriate indicative. For the same purpose Fenarolo introduces sentences which are either unfinished or elliptical<sup>42</sup> or he breaks up the talk either with exclamatory or interrogative sentences which Gioppo addresses to himself.<sup>43</sup>

However the most important feature of this language in comparison to the other characters and also in comparison to all the characters of the previous Brescian plays is the plurality of the syntactical levels in his own language. One of the most comically attractive features of Gioppo is his erotic excitement; his childish (though never platonic) ardour in front of women reverberates in a syntactical euphoria. On his own admission, the presence of Camilla and Panfilo

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41. Il Sergio, I. 2. 18-22.

42. 'Perche se bẽ digo adesso à un muodo, e fina un puoco à un altro, questo apòto sè el vero segno d'esser amartelao', *ibid.*, I.2.49-50.

43. 'Ma te voio puo anche dir [...] la se lasserà sbasir', *ibid.*, I.2.15-2  
'e se ben e canto [...] e sarò qua adesso', *ibid.*, III.9.68.

43. *Ibid.*, I. 9. 15-7; II. 13. 5-.



(his son disguised as a woman) and the recollection of Alessandra excite his oratory eloquence:

con sta imagination, e scomenci adoperar la  
lengua, e qua favellando con esse e me sentiva  
crescer l'anemo, ingrossar l'appetito [...]  
parechiao un favelar Ciceronian, e un dir  
oratorio.<sup>44</sup>

Likewise frustration, rage, and nervousness are marked by a series of sentences which are as fragmentary as the course of his thoughts; his resignation, sometimes with a touch of irony, manifests itself with a tone which recalls popular songs or ditties as if Gioppo instinctively searched for comfort in popular wisdom.

The variety of his spoken syntax not only places Gioppo artistically a step ahead of his companions in the play, but also, by dissociating him from the stereotyped syntax of the old lovers of the Commedia dell'Arte, marks an improvement in relation to the vernacular comedy of Calmo.<sup>45</sup>

The intention expressed in the prologue to use the Veneto in homage to the concept of verisimilitude is made evident above all in the use of hyperboles. As has been seen in the two previous comedies hyperbole is the label of lovers of all ages and social status.

Fenarolo uses this stylistic device as carefully and sparingly as the previous ones and does not trespass into the burlesque or the clownish. They are mainly well-known popular sayings such as, 'tal poltron fachin [...] sarà ficao in l'oro fina i occhi', 'morto e spanto

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44. Il Sergio, I. 9. 9-13.

45. Gioppo parts from the uniform aulic tone of Collofonio larded with synonymic accumulations. His style is more similar to that of Cocolin in La Fiorina by Calmo, where on the other hand the plot and the poverty of expressiveness make the old lover a pale figure.

per so amor',<sup>46</sup> or expressions coined by Gioppo himself, or they are inspired by the industrious temperament of the Venetian merchant and are related to material values:

besogna che lassa la essecution del mio inamora=  
mento con sta griega, à i heriedi di i mie heriedi,  
[...] certi, che per arivar a i cinquecento de  
dota, impegna fin al letto.<sup>47</sup>

It is indicative that even when he is even more annoyed his images are still as concrete and as anchored to solid details as are the images which express his haunting awareness about the passing of time. His most successful and comic hyperboles do not refer to love but to the obsession with diseases of old age, acciacchi. Nervous fear enlarges the details which appear to him in their disheartening realism. It is not so much his dreams of love which provide fun as the plastic vividness of some descriptions:

mi no vorave che l'andasse tãto alla lunga, che  
me amalasse, e che me debilitasse i membri, ò  
che cascasse della percossia, ò qualche altro  
diavolo',<sup>48</sup>

or this metaphoric hyperbole,

me sè intrao una ventositae in toi foli, che tra  
suspiri e altro me inse tanto vento dal cuor che  
farave andar à vele una Marciliana,

which expands into a more ironic one when Gioppo gives the catarrh coming out <sup>of</sup> his throat the shape of a riding knight:

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e se vago drio à sta via, me farò calar un  
catarro de tal sorte che un dì, un dì l'anema  
me salterà fuori à caval de un regasso.<sup>49</sup>

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46. Il Sergio, I. 3. 64-6; I. 9. 16-17.

47. Ibid., I. 2. 3-4; I. 3. 98-9.

48. Ibid., II. 7. 5-8.

49. Ibid., III. 9. 42-8.

This is followed by another metaphoric hyperbole overflowing with forlorn humour not only towards himself, but also towards his role in the play, and towards all the old men who want to enjoy pleasures no longer suitable to their age:

e hò anche sto cataro, uh, ah, gotte, mal de renele, la siatica sta piva sordina, el malanno e la mala pasqua. Sti anni sè pur le male bestie, se un vecchio stranua, ghe salta sangue dal naso, se'l tosse, el se pissa in le calze; sel dorme, el se soffega: sel magna, el lassa i denti intol pan, sel parla l'inse de carizà.<sup>50</sup>

In his work on the Commedia dell'Arte, Adolfo Bartoli defines Pantalone as 'il Senex delle Commedie latine, che ha subito certe influenze di tempi e di luoghi, ma che è rimasto nella sostanza lo stesso; è il gran tipo umano del vecchio che non si ricorda della propria età, avendone pure tutti i difetti e tutti i malanni'.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from the plot based on comic situations characteristic of the erudite comedy, Gioppo's drama centres throughout the play around his refusal to forget the contradictions between his amorous ardours and his age.

All the images haunting his mind express his awareness of this contradiction. Metaphors, similes, figurative images sum up three motifs: the violence of his sexual desires, the malaise of old age, and the consequences of the changes caused by the passing of the years. These are themes which all belong to the tradition of classical comedy which when grouped together give to Gioppo a psychological consistency and an ironic note stronger than that usually portraying the old man

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50. Il Sergio, IV. 11. 9-15.

51. Adolfo Bartoli, Scenari inediti della Commedia dell'Arte (Florence, 1880), p. xvii.

of the Veneto theatre of the mid-sixteenth century.

More than in Calmo's comedies the breath of joyous vitality filtering through the relations between Gioppo and himself and the others is traceable to Calmo's Lettere whose protagonist is also an old man, 'rosegao brovao'<sup>52</sup> e squarzaio,<sup>53</sup> by Cupido. There is the same humorous self-portrait of an old man full of sexual desire:

la conscientia me spenze, i anni me bastona,  
l'apetito me fa animo, ma le gambe me fa Giacomo;  
Cupido me esorta, el tempo si me manazza.<sup>54</sup>

There are the same circumlocutions trying to reconcile the old man's doubts on the decorousness of the passion; in Calmo it is 'una cusion laboriosa' to decide if it is convenient: 'si l'e conveniente, podendo, un vechio intrar intel bozzolo de Cupido, non obstante la etae e le repression del so confessor';<sup>55</sup> this is a perplexity which Gioppo's optimism solves imagining himself overcome by the irresistible attraction of the Greek Alessandra for him:

la s'infriserà tanto in tol fato mio, che un zorno  
la vuol morir de fame per amor mio [...] si che me  
par aver tuti i torti del modo.<sup>56</sup>

The original personification of the 'vertu' whose values are for Gioppo as fleeting and transient as women and fashion -

in efeto Bigolo, le virtù no se usa pi, le porta  
el busto lungo, e se voio aspetar che le se  
torna a usar.<sup>57</sup>

is the first of a series of references to a mythical past which

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52. burned. III. 15. 22-3.

53. p. 5. II. 13. 4-5. In Calmo too there is a comparison with a period of the past. Lettere, p. 42.

54. Ibid., p. 45.

55. Ibid., p. 51.

56. Il Sergio, I. 2. 19-23

57. Ibid., I. 2. 1-2.

Gioppo identifies unconsciously with youth. It is a past in which he would have had more 'freedom' while now he must rely unsuccessfully on the help of the servants:

Horsù tra le disgratie che s'ha in sto mondo,  
la mazor è el no poder far de manco de servidori.<sup>58</sup>

Hence the comic changes of mood: if elated he strives to give value to the present which coincides with his old age, 'orsu la virtù in l'amor di vechi, sè a ponto cosè el sguazeto che se fa sula carne frola';<sup>59</sup> if dejected he feels himself irresistibly belonging to the previous century, 'mo che mondo del diavolo è questo del 1503. fin adesso che semo del 1558. el mondo è pezorao nonanta per cento, e mi sono cusì tondo che vivo all'usanza del tre'.<sup>60</sup>

The awareness of the limits imposed by his age magnifies also in his mind his sexual strength. The images he lingers on are neither platonic nor refined, though with less ornaments and tinselling they describe as do those in the Lettere by Calmo, the same 'amore tutto sensuale e realistico, [with] poca o punta idealità'.<sup>61</sup> While impatiently waiting for the servant who is late, Gioppo dreams 'almanco un puoco de la so [Alessandra's] spuazza in boca da intertegnirme',<sup>62</sup> exactly as the protagonist of the Lettere tells his woman how many times he has ventured himself in long walks along the 'pescaressa' under the rain to receive one 'de le vostre spuazze';<sup>63</sup>

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58. Il Sergio, I. 3. 6-7.

59. Ibid., III. 15. 22-3.

60. Ibid., II. 13. 4-8. In Calmo too there is a comparison with a period of the past, Lettere, p. 46.

61. Rossi, 'Introduzione' to Lettere, p. xxi.

62. Il Sergio, I. 3. 23-4.

63. Lettere, p. 31.



also the comparison of his own sexual appetite with that of the animals for food is present in Calmo with even more realism. Gioppo is aware that he lifts 'la testa co fa un cavalo che sente crivolar la biava',<sup>64</sup> as Calmo admits that 'solamente a sentirla a stranuar e'devinto pezo ca un anemal'.<sup>65</sup> The commercial expressions too belong to the literary inheritance of the Lettere. One of them is addressed to 'la executora d'i so apetiti',<sup>66</sup> and Gioppo argues against the obstacles to 'la essecution del mio inamoramento con sta griega'.<sup>67</sup> Similar is the way they personify their thoughts; 'pensando [...] el me se ha drezzao quanta sustantia e'ho habuo adosso',<sup>68</sup> recalls Gioppo's 'e stava col pensier drezzao alle cose d'Amor';<sup>69</sup> the way Gioppo creates a comic aulicism, 'l'apetito Venereo',<sup>70</sup> echoes Calmo's words, 'l'intelletto venero',<sup>71</sup> and the metaphors, more frankly obscene, belong to the facetious and mocking spirit of the Lettere, though the sparkling verbal expressions in Calmo's work are far more restrained in Gioppo. Both protagonists, driven by their senile ardour, offer the woman respectively, 'el possesso de le primitie genital' asking 'el fausto, el trionfo, el privilegio de la vostra concavitate meliflua',<sup>72</sup> and permission to approach 'a tacar, e a petar el gardelo dela mia lascivia al

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64. Il Sergio, III. 15. 12-13.

65. Lettere, p. 7.

66. Ibid., p. 32.

67. Il Sergio, I. 2. 3-4. Il Sergio, IV. 1. 12-13.

68. Lettere, p. 50. Il Sergio, IV. 1. 25-8.

69. Il Sergio, I. 9. 1.

70. Ibid., III. 9. 38.

71. Lettere, p. 32.

72. Ibid., p. 32.

vischio della vostra dolcezza'.<sup>73</sup> Also the other sea metaphor is not so much a sign of realism due to the presence of the sea in Venice as an assimilation of a similar image from Calmo: 'Havemo fornio el navilio, amor me supia in la vela e se so tegnir dreto el timon, voio andar con tuto el navilio fin in magazen alla doana';<sup>74</sup> the same images are used in Il Saltuzza (I. 4.) to describe the sexual desire and the action of the go-between, 'horsuso, mi e ho vento in poppa, e si comando la barca, e si vogio andar a voga battua, e con la pozza in man, in porto de madona Lionora'.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover they enrich Gioppo's portrait bringing into relief two aspects: a certain vanity in using expressions which are rather foreign to his every-day linguistic level and a certain comic hypocrisy towards his passion. In fact between Gioppo and his figurative language there exists a strange relationship. Gioppo uses it to camouflage reality, to hide the ridiculous discrepancy between his years and his feelings. The awareness of his age which has been previously pointed out as a source of self-irony leads him also to mystify the real facts by using abstract words. Generally, in his 'spoken' language, abstract words are rare and they fulfil the above-mentioned function as at the beginning of the first act:

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73. Il Sergio, IV. 1. 12-13. See also 'Se muova adunche la vostra larghitae et abundante sfessura', Lettere, p. 32 and 'Degneve de vegnirme in contra, e accettarme in tol Bucintoro della vostra larga liberalitae', Il Sergio, IV. 1. 15-6.

74. Il Sergio, III. 15. 26-8.

75. Il Travaglia, I. 7.

In efeto Bigolo, le virtù no se usa pi, le porta  
el busto longo, e se voio aspetar che le se torna  
à usar bisogna che lassa la essecution del mio  
inamoramento con sta griega, a i heriedi de i mie heriedi.  
[...]

Le pur anca granda, che la mia zentileza, el mio  
bel muodo, el mio natural, no habia almanco dodese  
carati de merito in sto mio amor.<sup>76</sup>

But the attempt at self-deception does not succeed. In this case  
it is Bigolo's presence that unmasks Gioppo. He does so by trans-  
lating each of his abstract terms into concrete ones:

Cert à no neghi que l'havì u bu natural,  
no piasa à i fñi, ma senza l'ontiu de i  
dinier difilcilmët ol ghintra.<sup>77</sup>

So the 'carati de merito' become 'ontiu de i dinier', the 'essecution'  
is translated by 'ghintra' and 'el natural' becomes 'his body'.

Apart from these, many other various metaphors and similes stud  
Gioppo's comic remarks.<sup>78</sup> They do not stand out as isolated euphem-  
isms but flow out without literary affectation alternating with loving  
epithets, pet-phrases, diminutives, grumbling, short sermons and  
admonitions.<sup>79</sup> These are all elements which had already begun to  
be part of the basic language of the old lover in Calmo and which

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76. Il Sergio, I. 2. 1-12.

77. Ibid., I. 2. 13-14.

78. Greater realism has been given to Gioppo's language by the almost  
complete absence of 'pedantic' elements in Latin. The very few  
remind one more of pet-phrases assimilated by everyday language  
than the cultural showing-off of Calmo's old lovers.

79. In comparison with the proverbial forms of Lazarina, (see next  
chapter) which form the essential core of her idiom, the senten-  
tious sentences in Gioppo reveal a linguistic level higher than  
that of the procuress because they are often proverbial sentences  
coined by him. Proverbs are not very frequent in Calmo either.



later became lifeless forms in the language of the scenari.<sup>80</sup>

Here, however, in Fenarolo, they are still alive and form a creative language which moulds the somewhat capricious but fundamentally optimistic figure of Gioppo, his trustful attitude towards others, his irrepressible fondness towards all women, young and old, and above all his longing to be 'cocoato'.<sup>81</sup>

Maria Luisa Altieri remarks that what creates in Calmo two different linguistic levels is the use of archaic words: she quotes Il Travaglia, where there is the 'veneziano corretto, un po' aulico, di Collofonio e quello più trasandato e plebeo di Malvisto e di Zonfetto'.<sup>82</sup> In Il Sergio, on the contrary, Gioppo's Veneto stands out as a higher language than Lazarina's, the procuress, because of a greater variety of syntactical forms and a richer range of words.

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80. Spezzani, 'Prime manifestazioni del linguaggio di Pantalone: a) elementi affettivi b) elementi gnomici', in 'Il primo repertorio linguistico di Pantalone', pp. 567-9; Spezzani, 'Il linguaggio del Pantalone pregoldoniano', pp. 667-73.

81. The diminutive of one's own name is a characteristic also in Calmo. Apart from Cocolin who reminds one of the verb 'to fondle', Collofonio calls himself several times, 'Collofoniato', Il Travaglia, I. 20., IV. 2 and 5. Gioppo ends his serenade to the Greek woman like this: 'Tira la corda, e fa scaldar el leto, Vienme incontra, e despoia el to Giopeto', III. 11.

82. Altieri, pp. 274-5.

Lazarina

Lazarina is the character who mostly testifies to the links between Il Sergio and the Veneto theatre. Her idioms have strong similarities with Agata, the procuress in Artemio Giancarli's La Zingana who also speaks Veneto. Despite the fact that the comic vein pervading the two works is different, and this *is reflected* ~~also~~ in the portraits of the two lively women, many syntactical and lexical details are similar. There is the same practical and yet affectionate tone towards their own domestic activities, the same arch understanding with the accomplice (I. 9), the same indulgence towards their profession of procuress and towards themselves (I. 9), and the same tendency to use the language for their own benefit.

Lazarina is with Bigolo, the Bergamask servant, the deus ex machina of all the deceptions and the beffe upon which the comedy is built, but the volume of her talking is inversely proportional to the high number of her interventions on stage. Her language is always concise and essential, both when she reveals her plans extensively or when she plots part of them off stage, when she idly broods to herself on her profession or when she happens to have a chat with the most important characters or with a comparsa.

Syntactically her sentences are modelled on a spoken style and are formed by short, often independent propositions, though more often they are joined by parataxis and by short hypotactic phrases. But the grammatical construction which gives a character of its own to Lazarina's dialogue and distinguishes it from the colloquialism of Gioppo and Taramoto is the polysyndeton e with which the woman sets the pace and sing-songs her sentences. It is a rhetorical device which, though not new, is essential to the characterization of her linguistic level and to the dramatic reproduction of the 'ciacolar'

and of the 'mollezza' of the Veneto.<sup>1</sup>

Used as a conclusive conjunction, summing up some observations in place of a subordinate clause more grammatically appropriate, polysyndeton stresses the neat simplicity of the character.<sup>2</sup> But this use is also relatively rare in comparison to the massive presence of sentences formed by three or four principal prepositions loosely linked by a rhythmic series of e:

e mi voio batter e dirghe che alle tre ore de note, ò  
vu ò mi ghe menerà la so morosa, e col sarà dreto,  
vederò de far sì chel ve buta al collo una caen d'oro,  
e si vederò chel vegna cõ una bela romana de raso che  
sè de un so fio che no i sa zo che sia d'esso, e vu  
bastonelo, e tioleghe la fuora da dosso, e fel saltar  
fuora de quel balcon.<sup>3</sup>

Contrary to Gioppo's elocution the conjunction 'e' does not substitute a subordinate conjunction, that is it never renders a period, which would otherwise have a stronger literary tone, more colloquial. In Lazarina's narrative style the e is introduced as an element syntactically superfluous from a grammatical point of view, but which is successful in creating the tone in which she narrates events, facts and considerations without linking them in a consequentia/ way. Sometimes e has an onomatopoeic value because it seems to indicate the pauses in her speech for the intake of breath.<sup>4</sup>

The reiteration of the polysyndeton however, never creates the impression of laziness so that it never contradicts nor artistically

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1. Gianfranco Folena, 'L'esperienza linguistica di Carlo Goldoni', in I capolavori di Carlo Goldoni (2 vols, Milan, 1970), I, pp.52-3.

2. Il Sergio, I. 5. 18; II. 7. 22, 26, 36.

3. Ibid., III. 14. 17-23; for other examples III. 9. 26; III. 15. 8. 30-36; IV. 3. 60-62; IV. 4. 34-36.

4. The same plain narrative form is present in Agata's speech in La Zingana, III, 9.; IV. 1.; IV. 2.

invalidates the image of a quick business-woman created by the events of the plot and by the hammering conciseness of the numerous proverbs which, with the polysyndeton, form the second and most important element in Lazarina's language. The length of her sentences is tempered so that it never seems a rhetorical device used to obtain sheer comic effects but always gives the impression of a live, immediate language.

Even the occasional complex sentence, joined by hypotaxis, stresses the spontaneous flow of the spoken tone and the simple level of her vernacular. Formed mainly by consecutives using the same rhythm and following the same linear sequence as the main clauses - 'vostra moier ha sentio ogni cosa dal balcon, e si ha tolto su, e si sè anda a casa mia'<sup>5</sup> - it loses its original syntactical value of subordination and sounds like stock phrases, 'e si ghe ho dito; e si la dise'.<sup>6</sup>

This is a function which is very important because the traditional incidental are rather rare in Lazarina (particularly if one compares them with the abundant use which, as previously said, is characteristic of the Veneto characters), and rather toned down being limited to the following: 'moia, mo', 'alla fe', and 'cape'. Furthermore, being used almost always at the beginning, they do not have, as in Gioppo, the function of interrupting a sentence which would otherwise have been too elaborate, nor that of giving a spoken tone to a literary structure.

Her sentences linked by subordinate clauses are less numerous than in Gioppo which is evidence of a lower linguistic level; furthermore, those inserted are rather subdued by the use of the indicative in place

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5. Il Sergio, IV. 12. 11-12.

6. Ibid., III. 9. 24; III. 15. 14; for other examples, see III. 15. 24; I. 5. 18.

of the required subjunctive,<sup>7</sup> by the loose use of che without specific function and order - 'che ho un certo trafego con lui [...] che spiero; e gho tegnuo à mente a far lasagne, che la manizava quella mescola che se la fusse non so che cossa',<sup>8</sup> by the elision of the conjunction che itself - 'el no acade che tra nu, che se cognoscemo za mile ani, faga la pizzochera',<sup>9</sup> or by the use of the main declaratory verb - 'mo su co sarà la rata del mese, e ch'el me romperà el cao'.<sup>10</sup>

Lazarina's verbal imagination is as modest as her syntax. Her language does not sparkle with a variety of words and word-play. It is perfectly integrated into the linear 'domestic' syntax of the woman thus emphasising those aspects of Lazarina's character which represent her as a homely bawd.

Proverbs are the major expressive form in her speech.<sup>11</sup> Their natural conciseness fits in well with Lazarina's homespun philosophy. They reflect her practical behaviour, and shrewdness.

They all relate to the one topic of business, and money, - 'corando el sabion el se puol far à baldezza, perche el vadagno sè una coltrina che se mette davanti à la vergogna';<sup>12</sup> 'chi è vergognoso va strazzoso';<sup>13</sup> 'no lassar mai el certo per l'incerto'.<sup>14</sup> Hence the sense of the preciousness of time, as the inspiring concept of all her

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7. Il Sergio, I. 5. 3, 17; I. 10. 5, 52.

8. Ibid., I. 5. 41-2; I. 10. 45-7; III. 9. 55-6.

9. Ibid., I. 5. 38-9.

10. Ibid., I. 5. 63-4.

11. Proverbs are also frequent on Agata's lips, La Zingana, I. 1; III. 3; II. 21.

12. Il Sergio, II. 6. 5-7; more earning gives no authority as money is the curtain which one puts in front of the shameful parts (Boerio).

13. Ibid., II. 7. 23; whoever is shy goes around a pauper.

14. Ibid., III. 15. 27.



actions, - 'chi predica al deserto perde el sermon, chi lava el cao all'aseno perde la lessia el saon',<sup>15</sup>; 'el proverbio dise chi lava el carbon consuma el tempo';<sup>16</sup> 'e digo che à favelarghe de ste cosse e pesto aqua in morter'.<sup>17</sup>

The rich collection of proverbs is also relevant in relation to the sixteenth-century tradition of the comic. The proverb as an emblem of a plain style is an ancient device, but the quickness of the bawd's mind, conveyed by proverbs, becomes itself a proverb in the sixteenth-century comedy: Costanzo addressing a bawd in Gl'Inganni by Nicolò Secco says, 'Tu hai più proverbi che correggi l'asino',<sup>18</sup> and Taramoto on his first meeting with Lazarina compliments her because, 'sempre, vu havè pevere da spedir'.<sup>19</sup>

Other residui linguistici are typical of the stock character of the old procuress, but they do not take away the fresh, natural simpatia which Lazarina inspires. An example of this is her first entrance. Her early-morning mood, though sounding spontaneous, recalls Agata's gaiety when she first comes on stage, 'Me ne vago fuora de casa la mattina in la bon'ora, de nissuna cosa strania no sia desiderosa, ne in acqua, ne in terra no sia spaurosa de bona zente sia saludà e con boni presenti sia ben cortizà e onorà'.<sup>20</sup> Similarly a touch of

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15. Il Sergio, I. 10. 1-2.

16. Ibid., II. 2. 6.

17. Ibid., II. 2. 8-9.

18. I. 1.

19. Il Sergio, I. 5. 11.

20. La Zingana, I. 5.

superstition in Lazarina, who sees a good omen in the cackling of her hens under her bed, finds an equivalent in Gl'Ingannati of the Accademici Intronati where the nurse Clemenzia has a similar expression: 'Io non so quel che si vorrà indovinare che tutte le mie galline hanno fatto, questa mattina si fatto cicalare che pareva che mi volessen metter la casa a romore'.<sup>21</sup> In both comedies this gives a touch of homeliness to the two old women but, by the middle of the century, the joke is on the way to becoming a stock-jest. It is in fact found also on the lips of Agnella (II. 10. 50-1) and once more in Agata (I.10.).

The links with the tradition are further attested when Lazarina's imagination hovers on the profession of procuress:

Dio che bon mestier è sto mio, sia benedetta  
l'anema di chi me l'ha insegnao, [...] vardè che  
no paga troppo fitto, ne che desidera che cressa  
el formento co fa sti usureri marzi, quel che  
importa più vardè che no meta tropo cavedal in  
la mia bottega.<sup>22</sup>

These observations can be related also to the monologue of the bawd in Calmo<sup>23</sup> and to the already described monologue in Agnella. But while the monologues in Calmo's plays and Agnella are stylistically strongly reminiscent of those of Plautus, where the characters introduce themselves and their profession through long soliloquies both Lazarina and Agata express their opinions with short remarks within the context of other events thus avoiding the artificial tone of the Latin presentation. Indeed in Lazarina most of her observations are

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21. I. 2. 1-4.

22. Il Sergio, II. 7. 67-73.

23. The concept that the ruffiana is financially a safer profession than other jobs is expressed by Cortese in Il Travaglia, I. 2.

reduced to simple similes, metatheses which add some spice to the play, 'orsu rufiane e fachini sè co è le piere e la calcina, e chi vuol far una fabrica d'amor, no bisogna che s'intriga altro impiastro'.<sup>24</sup> The author in this case too is careful not to make excessive use of them. They can be counted on the fingers of one hand and they too, like all the other linguistic features examined, are never brought in for the sake of sheer fun or as jokes. They are in tune with the proverbs both because of the concise form and because of their content. Each image in fact refers to other jobs, - 'che voggio che femo consulto co fa i Avocati',<sup>25</sup> 'anzi per ogni dover deverave esser anche mi in tel numero di i miedeghi'<sup>26</sup> - so that Lazarina, perhps with some self-irony, gives a mask of respectability to her business creating a gap between her and the large number of vulgar ruffiane present in the comedy tradition. At other times the figurative expressions refer to objects of her domestic life, like shopping, fresh bread, fresh eggs, chickens, the huge rat caught in the trap, and glasses of wine which portray her, like Agata, as a family go-between.

These considerations bring us back to the spoken tone of Lazarina's language, to the diminutives, the vezzeggiativi which are typical of the language of the Veneto theatre. Lazarina makes great use of them, but whenever she does so it is for practical reasons.

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24. Il Sergio, III. 13. 51-3.

25. Ibid., II. 2. 39-40.

26. Ibid., II. 7. 79-81. The comparison between the doctor and the figure of the ruffian goes back to Ovid in the Ars Amatoria, (I. 357). But the literary heritage has disappeared; expressed in dialect it seems to belong to the language of Lazarina's social background.



While in Gioppo they seem an integral part of the sentence and have above all an onomatopoeic function, Lazarina uses them mostly to flatter other people. Alessandra, the Greek woman Gioppo is in love with, is harassed with 'anima mia cara, speranza mia dolce, occhio mio, tenera de cor, dolce de sangue, tenerina colombina, caro cuor, cari occhietti'.<sup>27</sup> This storm of vezzeggiativi ceases immediately the offer is refused. Gasparina, the young cheeky servant who in exchange for a young man offers Lazarina half a dozen of his mistress's handkerchiefs and a small flask of good wine, is 'anema mia cara', 'cattivella' and 'cara fia'.<sup>28</sup> The endearing words for Gioppo are even more abundant - 'signor mio belo', 'missier mio zentil' and 'missier mio caro'.<sup>29</sup> Sometimes the mystification is more subtle. Taramoto is only asked, 'un servisietto' that is 'un puoco de bastonae, à zo chel stesse un mese in letto'.<sup>30</sup> In order to avoid paying her rent Lazarina pretends poverty saying she only owns 'quatro campi de tera';<sup>31</sup> she 'sells' her clients (the old Gioppo) denigrating the young men 'sti fromboletti dal tempo d'adesso',<sup>32</sup> and minimizes adultery as 'qualche piasereto onesto'.<sup>33</sup>

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27. Il Sergio, I. 6.

28. Ibid., I. 5.

29. Ibid., II. 7.

30. Ibid., I. 5. 57-8.

31. Ibid., II. 7. 33.

32. Ibid., I. 6. 57.

33. Ibid., I. 5. 61-2.

Though inferior to Gioppo's, her Veneto is not uncouth, clumsy or boorish. Her sentences which are short and never complex, are also never ungrammatical. They never indicate the inability to formulate speech correctly and show some consistency in the use of tenses.<sup>34</sup> This prevents her from being classified as part of the populace.

Though Lazarina's vocabulary is not prominent for its originality, extravagance or strikingly comic effects, her language is valid because it is as dialogante as Gioppo's and because the general soft tone given by the sounds of the dialect gives a coherent physiognomy to her character setting her against the same background as Gioppo's.

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34. See for instance the constant use of the subjunctive in the optative sentences: 'vorave ben che me fasse un servisetto'; 'vorave che ghe fassemmo'; 'vorave che [...] ghe dasse un poco de bastonae'; 'vossemmo che se fasse un servisetto'; Il Sergio, II. 16.

Taramoto

Taramoto's language is, from a 'realistic' viewpoint, less consonant with the everyday conversations of a Venetian district than Gioppo's and Lazarina's; in particular his boasts, and dreams of bravo mariol<sup>1</sup> get the upper hand.

It is the author himself who labels him a stock character, defining him as 'bravo vinitiano' in the list of the characters.

There are four major elements in his characterization, combined with a certain originality in the light of the tradition of the 'braggart soldier' and the Capitano di Ventura.<sup>2</sup>

Taramoto, the bravo with his sea wanderings contributes to the happy conclusion of the plot; Taramoto, the fond tutor of the foundling Emilia, gives realism to his relations with the other characters and to his dreams. Taramoto, the braggart, and Taramoto, the aged lover, fill the play with buffoonery. This last feature prevails over the others because without his imaginary deeds the character would hardly exist.

As a globe-trotting bravo he links the episodes of which he is a protagonist with those of Emilia and Odorico because saving Emilia in her cradle when in Greece and bringing her to Venice is the first step to the happy end of the play.

As 'el Bogia, el can, el destruzzi mondo', and 'el nemi o de Cristiani',<sup>3</sup> he inserts himself in the beffa that Lazarina and

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1. Il Sergio, II. 16. 59.

2. Spezzani, 'L'arte rappresentativa di Andrea Ferrucci, e la lingua della Commedia dell'Arte', p. 395 n., 51.

3. Il Sergio, I. 4. 41.

Bigolo devise at Gioppo's expense. His actual feats as a cheap braggart see him both as protagonist and victim of two classical episodes of disguise and substitution, which are grotesque and laughter provoking because of the advanced years of the protagonists. It is he who agrees to beat up the poor Gioppo and reduce him 'negro co sè el diavolo'<sup>4</sup> under Lazarina's instructions. Disguised as the beloved Greek, it is he who Gioppo will approach with the tenderest name, 'speranzeta mia gazuola d'arzeno',<sup>5</sup> who is endowed by Gioppo with a 'carne de tela de renso fodrae d'onto sotil'.<sup>6</sup> And later it is he who will be taken by Gioppo for the devil himself. It is still Taramoto the bravo who will be trapped into a similar beffa organized by Bigolo ending up in Lazarina's arms.

The element and the motifs of the braggart are those of the comic tradition.<sup>7</sup> Conventional sources of comedy are the parade and the display of various kinds of weapons as part of his wardrobe; the gratuitous bragging with *a greater*<sup>din</sup> of words than *of* arms against someone inferior to him and caught by surprise; and the consequently disproportionate description based on the metaphor of the unlucky facchino in a squadron of one thousand enemies. The discrepancy between the burla really suffered and the report, with an addition of numberless awesome details *also* belongs to tradition,

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4. Il Sergio, IV.4. 7.

5. Ibid., IV.1. 7-8.

6. Ibid., IV.1. 10.

7. Critics usually make a distinction between the Capitano and the bravo. According to their criteria Taramoto is closer to the bravo, although he is distinctly different from the only bravo veneziano previous to him, Spazzaferro in Calmo's las Spagnolaz. This character is rare also in the Commedia dell'Arte where he appears only after 1584, see Bartoli, p. liv, n., 1.

as does the eager and restless search for fame - 'di che son morto, tamen nò, di che son sta amazio che l'è più honor'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in Taramoto the signs of the bullying braggart<sup>9</sup> and of the rogue are completely absent. His descriptions rarely insist on truculent details and bloody slaughters.

However, though he is a character following tradition more closely than the others in the play, Taramoto is also delineated as an individual with characteristics which make him entertaining and also unusually homely.

Taramoto is in fact built completely on his verbal accounts and exists only externally. His own nick-name acquires a meaning thanks to the episode invented by him in order to give him a suitably braggart birth (II.16.44). He exists only when he projects his ego which is made up of imaginary reveries and adventures. He is not made of actions, he is made of words. They are words which, however, by dint of being said have become real. They too undergo a sort of metamorphosis; through his words the fantastic becomes concrete, the moon, the stars and the sun come within reach (IV.12).<sup>10</sup> Taramoto himself tells Gioppo, 'e perche vedo che no crede a i fati, voio segurarve con le parole'.<sup>11</sup>

His interlocutors with whom he exchanges monologues more than dialogues are submerged under a flood of hyperboles whose end

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8. Il Sergio, IV.2. 6-7.

9. A characteristic peculiar to the bravo, see Zorzi, Farsa de Ranco e Tuorno e Beltrame, pp. xi-xli. Pandolfi, la Commedia dell'Arte, Storia e testo, I, p.326.

10. See also the entertaining breakfast with the moon by Collofonio, in Il Travaglia, II. 13.

11. Il Sergio, IV. 12. 58-9.



is not only that of creating bursts of laughter because of the swaggering content but also to underline the ironic contrast between the character who dominates in words and is cheated and the characters who keep silent and successfully devise the beffe.

A relevant contribution to the sonorizzazione of these aspects is given by the abundant but skilful use of onomatop<sup>o</sup>oeic devices as the onomatopoeia plays an important role in Taramoto's characterization. For instance while Gioppo in his day-dreams lives erotic scenes, Taramoto's dreams are made of movement and noise. When he opens his innermost self there *issues forth* a rumbling noise:

ho in le buole un sauro che se mua de massari tanta  
confusion de arme, tanto rumor de schiopi e balestre  
[...] che vien dal bastion che me circôda l'anemo. 12

Taramoto is constantly bewitched by noises and sounds. It is impossible to establish whether he is more seduced by the feats or by the noise they make. He himself says:

quando zolo, meno tanta furia e fazzo tanta ruza,  
che tutti scampa co fa i Oseli el mal tempo. 13

It is an example in which the three words in vernacular contribute to the phonetic recreation of the sheer physical force that this bravo veneziano uses to defeat not only the forces of nature but also *physical objects*.

As the play develops, the imaginary deeds become more and more incredible until Taramoto's voice becomes itself a weapon.

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12. Il Sergio, II. 18. 7-20. For a similar picture of the lover, see Coccolin in Calmo, La Fiorina, III. p. 27.

13. Il Sergio, II. 16. 35-7.

In a verbal battle with Gioppo,<sup>14</sup> the rhyming augmentatives resound as sharp as the swords in their war of vocalisms; even the strength of Taramoto's spit puts the enemies to rout:

Che le portio mai per mi ste armi? Le porto  
da imprestar a i mie nemisi e mi combatter  
con la spuzza solamente. 15

While the phonetic element underlines the attraction of the sonorous for Taramoto, the vocabulary demonstrates his fascination with the ostentatious, as well as the cultural low level of the day-dreamer.

In fact Taramoto's vocabulary is not formed by terms from the military repertoire. Taramoto is not interested in the functional but in the aesthetic effect, in the external impression it creates. Hence the listing of parts of armour together with other clothes (II.15) and the description of a fencing match as if it were rhythmic dance.

His military jargon is also impressive for the elementary expressiveness of some phrases frequently used which give to the character the impression of linguistic childishness, 'far paura, far mal, far briga, me duol', which also reinforces the image of the homely bravo. This is a feature which is again reinforced by the repeated use of a third group of war words: those referring to the human body. Through them Taramoto describes his moods as warrior during an assault. Some are childish, 'vegno a le man, metter sotto i pè', dove vado impizzo fogo', others are pantagruel-

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14. Il Sergio, IV. 11. 20-2.

15. Ibid., IV. 12. 50-2.

like such as the episode of the sneeze with which he sucks a friar into his throat, or that of the blow with which he crushes a fisherman underground, or the gesture with which he hurls a man on to the top of a church tower.

It is significant also that in the only case in which he is called to solve a real problem (to decide whether Odorico is a man or a woman) he gives his whole support to the suggestion of an immediate bodily check (V.11. 36-7) which also indicates that his 'vulgarity' is never studied but only a spontaneous almost infantile way of expressing himself.

A similar tone is achieved through some hyperbolic comparisons where the first term io is opposed to unlimited indefinite pronouns:

Con tuto che fazza paura a tuto il mondo, no  
me ho mai podesto far paura a mi; 16

perche no ghe altri che ammazza che mi; 17

chi me puol far gnente, so ho ammazza*o* tutti i  
mie nemisi? 18

e se no fusse che son inamorao no ghe sarave  
se no mi solo al mondo, perche averave amazzai  
tutti i altri. 19

Other hyperboles have a more specific comic role. They recall the achievements of the heroes of the fairy tales. Taramoto's courage has the dimensions of a giant, 'un anemo cusi grando, che se me destendesse in terra, e avanzaria con le gambe e

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16. Il Sergio, I. 4. 6-8.

17. Ibid., IV. 12. 135-6.

18. Ibid., I. 4. 9-10.

19. Ibid., I. 4. 13-14. See also 'Veniesia no ha un mio par', ibid., II. 18. 6.



col cao fuor del mondo';<sup>20</sup> and the tendency and pleasure he enjoys swallowing up people are those of giants and ogres.

Contrary to the erudite tradition, the emphasis in his descriptions is not on the food but on the action. Taramoto eats human flesh, swallows the friar, stuffs thunderbolts into his mouth exactly as witches and wizards eat children and the whale eats Pinocchio. Closer to the world of fairy tales than to the heroic poems are his victorious undertakings against the atmospheric elements.

The fairy tale simplicity of the images and the vocabulary are reintroduced into the social context of the other characters particularly through the syntax which supports them.

The numerous primary sentences, the prevalence of secondary clauses of first grade, and the very frequent and multiple use of the polysyndeton give Taramoto's stupefying adventures a more colloquial tone than Gioppo's elimination of all traces of literary language. Apart from the traditional Veneto stock-phrases, 'mo', and 'mo che', the chatting tone is reflected through the use of narrative polysyndeton constantly introduced to strengthen propositions, rhetorical interrogatives, concessive clauses, and comparative sentences so that not only do they lose any narrative rhythm but they also give the public the impression that this conjunction is used by Taramoto to hide his sense of syntactical insecurity and a certain uneasiness in the logical development of his thoughts.

In addition, his longer interventions are formed by short sentences, without rigid syntactical links between them so that the breaking up of the sentences suggests confusion:

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20. Il Sergio, II. 18. 7-9.

Co se fara? Ste, aspetè, lasème metter zo?  
tireve in la, scampè, andè a largo, tirève  
fuora da i pie.<sup>21</sup>

Indicative also are the kind of primary or secondary sentences used more frequently by Taramoto. Among the first he prefers those which by their very nature lack the conciseness of a neat clear-cut statement: hence the abundance of rhetorical questions rhythmically stressed by the pronoun chi. On this proposition is built the initial presentation of the braggart who shows how it is thanks to love that mankind has been saved from his slaughters.<sup>22</sup> The same task of creating easy exaggerations is given to the iteration of common and colloquial adverbs such as 'dove' and 'co'.

Among the primary sentences another type of proposition which suits the mentality of the boastful champion is the imperative with the value of a concessive sentence, which indicates the overestimation of his own position. But the sharpness of the command is softened in Taramoto by a tone of condescending benevolence 'E però tolè chi volè' is the invitation Taramoto addresses to mankind, 'Canzonè, disè via, pota, mo commandè',<sup>23</sup> No paura gniente, baseme, e sera i occhi' are the comic invitations addressed to Lazarina and Bigolo to take advantage of his magnanimity, creating hilarity as the two do not certainly need encouragement and instruction in methods of cheating.

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21. Il Sergio, V. 2. 20-1 and also II. 19. 1-.

22. Ibid, I. 4.

23. Ibid., I. 4. 23; I. 5. 50; II. 18. 36. Also the diminutives have a similar function in Taramoto. Contrary to Taramoto and Lazarina, he uses only a very limited number; Lazarina is called 'chiocheta' (I.5. 25), Bigolo 'tondin' (II.20. 13) and love, the great enemy, 'fantolin, frascheta' (I.4. 19).

Interesting also is Taramoto's use of secondary sentences which by their nature lend themselves more easily to be transformed into hyperboles. Symptomatic also is the use of consecutives because the consequence is not explained with a casual proposition which requires an intellectual deduction but is expressed with a more simple link, 'tanto, cosi', which is also an easy premise for a hyperbole, 'mo mi solo ho tanto fuoco in toi polmoni, che bastarave a inamorar mile mondi no che una Vinesia';<sup>24</sup> the spoken tone is also obtained by resorting to simple hypothetical clauses mainly with the verb in the present as if they were reality - for Taramoto at least. They reflect his confidence in his tales, not in his opinions as Taramoto has no opinions but only reveries.

If for threequarters of the play Taramoto is the narrator of amazing feats, for a quarter he is also the old lover. However in this latter role he departs from the tradition of the miles gloriosus as he does not boast of his prowess as a lover as he does of that as a fighter. He does not talk of the endless loves of his youth nor does he claim to have been a ladykiller. Though he likes the pleasure that love gives him because it makes him as cheerful as wine does, Cupid is the enemy that vexes him. Love is considered, according to the classical epic tradition, the enemy of the hero and of the war. To Taramoto love is the adversary which steals precious time that would otherwise be devoted to brawls. Coherent with his beliefs is therefore the entertaining use of the diminutive with which he addresses love. As Collofonio in Il Travaglia is piqued at having to succumb to love and calls it 'fantolini', 'forcheta', so Taramoto is full of astonishment at his defeat at the hand of a

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24. Il Sergio, I. 5. 19-21.

'fantolin', a 'frascjeta', and adds: 'se ti podessi farte homo, mo che bestia saravistu, ti saressi un altro mi? perche anca mi siando puto giera un altro ti'.<sup>25</sup>

Also as a lover reality interests him less than dreams. Reveries satisfy him more. When he discovers he has been cheated and his attempt to meet Gioppo's wife has resulted in a love encounter with the not unwelcoming Lazarina, his only reaction is benevolent grumbling and smiling indulgence for the woman. His daily activities confirm that as a lover he has no intimate emotions and that he realizes himself only through external manifestations. He spends his time pacing up and down Venice from one place to another, strolling continuously under the window of the woman he loves (II.15). It is he who suggests to Gioppo the idea of the noisy serenade under the widow's window - an idea perhaps inspired in Fenarolo by a similar scene in Il Travaaglia.<sup>26</sup>

On Taramoto's lips there are no suggestive, erotic puns. His dreams are never Boccaccian. To Gioppo's invitations to his beloved, full of rapture and elation, Taramoto opposes his exhilarating reassurance to his woman that after a love encounter with him she will give birth to a knight on a horse.<sup>27</sup> In his words there is also never that vein of irony with which Gioppo sometimes comments on his own feelings.

These detailed observations on the figurative language of Taramoto also indicate the rapport of independence and progress in

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25. Il Travaaglia, I. 20. Il Sergio, I.4. 20-2.

26. Il Travaglia, II. 13.

27. Il Sergio, III.7. 4-6.



the use of the vernacular by Fenarolo in comparison with Calmo. For instance even if the idea of the bravo speaking in Veneto came from Spazzaferro in Las Spagnolaz there is no resemblance between him and Taramoto. Fenarolo's bravo has a liking for the fantasioso with sometimes a touch of the bizarre and magical. His hyperbolical exploits which sometimes trespass into surrealist details give him a status above that of the local rustic bully and never inject into him that farcical element which characterizes Calmo's Spazzaferro. Taramoto is more similar to the heroes of the poems of chivalry. Like some of them he is a 'personaggio spropositato e tutto comico', and his figurative language is without 'alcuna connotazione precisa in senso locale e sociale'.<sup>28</sup> However by making him, like all the other characters, use a sing-song Veneto, that is 'ciacolar', Fenarolo smoothes away every impression of disagreeable bragging. The homely sound of the dialect transforms his rodomontades into harmless wishful thinking and his heroics into senile eccentricities known to the neighbourhood which looks on them indulgently.

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28. Segre, 'Polemica linguistica ed espressionismo dialettale', p. 397: the reference in Segre is to Margutte, the protagonist of Luigi Pulci's Morgante.

Bigolo

Bigolo's Bergamasco, like the Veneto of the three other characters, is authentic<sup>1</sup> and not a caricature of those phonetic or morphologic forms so easily mocked, despite the fact that this dialect has been a target of laughter in Renaissance comic tradition since its beginning, because of its sound.<sup>2</sup>

The Bergamasco represents the lowest linguistic level in this comedy coherent with the social status<sup>3</sup> of the character of whom his master Gioppo makes a pleasant and realistic description at the opening of the play:

certissimo sta bestia adesso haverà trovà qualche  
altra bestia insia de la stala del so paese, e si  
se sarà messo à fiabar se st'anno ghe sò sta purassai  
castagne in la valada, se le vache sò andae à ben, e  
similia. 4

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1. For a description of this language, see Vittorio Mora, Note di grammatica del dialetto bergamasco (Bergamo, 1966). Antonio Tiraboschi, pp. 29 ff. Russo, 'Note al bergamasco', in Contributo alla lettura del teatro pluridialettale Cinquecentesco (unpublished dissertation), pp. 88 ff.
  2. 'Parlar bergamasco significa parlar oscuro', P.S. Pasquali, 'A punti lessicali furbeschi', L'Italia Dialettale, serie seconda, 1934, X, p. 244 and Bortolo Belotti refers to the opinion of Marcantonio Michiel who used to find the language barbarous and a source of laughter, Storia di Bergamo e dei bergamaschi (3 vols, Milan, 1940) II. p. 315. See also ch. 'I Gelosi'. A few observations on the language' of this thesis.
  3. On the origin of the Bergamasco servant as a theatre type and on this figure in Renaissance comedy, see Maria Magni, 'Il tipo dello Zanni nella Commedia dell'Arte in Italia nei secoli XVI e XVII', Bergomum, year XX, N. 3, pp. 111-38. Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Farsa de Ranco e Tuogno e Beltrame. Spezzani, 'L'arte rappresentativa, di Andrea Ferrucci e la lingua della Commedia dell'Arte', pp. 379 ff., above all for the analysis of the language. Pandolfi, la Commedia dell'Arte, Storia e testo, I, pp. 157 ff. Giovanni Poli, 'Le origini degli Zanni', in la Commedia degli Zanni (Vicenza, 1973).
  4. Il Sergio, I.3. 15-19. On the emigration of the Bergamaschi as facchini and bakers from the valleys to Venice in 1500, see Pasquali, p. 242 n. 3, who transcribes long parts of the article by Carlo De Martino, 'Carattere e attività dei Bergamaschi al tempo della Serenissima', Bergomum, nuova serie. IV. oct-dic. 1930.

Rough in manners but with a sharp mind, this is the portrait of the Bergamaschi in Il Sergio. Bigolo himself, with more sarcasm than irony, grins at the common belief that all people from Bergamo are thick-headed. Watching the success of his burla he registers: 'Bergamasch ah i dis po cha i è gros, a i fa ol gros'.<sup>5</sup> This is a remark which echoes similar ones in the theatre of Calmo and Ruzzante.<sup>6</sup>

These two aspects - shrewdness and roughness of manners - are created in Il Sergio by contrasting Bigolo's graceless and outspoken concrete vocabulary<sup>7</sup> with the entertainingly human and simpatiche relations between him and the other characters.

The sound of the Bergamasco dialect is even more suitable than the Veneto to give a physiognomy to the characters as the coarse sound of its intonation easily reflects the speaker. Hence the importance of the phonetic characteristics of Bigolo's language. The cacophonous drawling and the harsh clumsy sounds are due to the great number of parole tronche (accented on the last syllable); to the fall of the last syllable with a consequent apocopation, which occasionally leads to the change of the sonant consonant into a surd to the fall of diphthongs, 'cao' to 'co'; and to the fall of

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5. Il Sergio, II.21. 27-8.

6. It is worthwhile noticing the different humour between Ruzzante's La Moscheta where Tonin says 'bergamaschi ha be gros el co, ma i ha un inzezn che s'fica per ogni bus', IV.1., and Calmo's humour in La Fiorina I. p. 2; see also favola V, notte 9, in Straparola, Le Piacevoli notti, where the author stresses that the Bergamaschi are more clever than the Florentines.

7. 'il bergamasco rifugge dalle forme astratte che hanno sempre in sè della cerebralità a scapito della immediatezza rappresentativa', Mora, pp. 84, 86.

the final syllables. Thus the language abounds with parole tronche giving an impression of roughness 'patru, ontu, passiu, bastiu, gnigu, and carbu'. Also the words ending in a create a coarse sound because they too are often the result of a troncamento 'le mani' becomes 'le man' then 'i ma'; another example is 'andaf a inamora'.

This impression is strengthened by the high proportion of words ending with a consonant,<sup>8</sup> above all due to the dropping of the ending vowel - 'cent, difilment, cont, quant, vergot, and negot'. This often leads to the assordamento of the preceding consonant 'colt (caldo), mot (modo), and scut (scudo)'. The same frequent phenomenon of assordamento is created by words ending with a dental consonant which make the plural by palatizing the consonant: 'ol malat = i malecc'. This sound too is very frequent on Bigolo's lips - 'andaf à inamora vo che se gob, vech, vo cha tegnì l'anema co i denc'; 'le forza che port ol me lech ne la cantina dol vi, perque ho tant calt la noch',<sup>9</sup> and sometimes it is used to underline with a rhyme the comic remarks he is proud of.

A note of uncouthness is also added by the less frequent assordamento of v into f, a phenomenon which is due to changes in the endings of verbs - 'faf baia, parlaf, slargheraf, e si haveraf', and to the dissociations of consonants which reduplicate them, 'icsi, xi'.

This abundance of consonants at the end of a word often creates the collision of two consonants thus coupling the disagreeable

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8. For the morphological reasons of this phenomenon, see Mora, pp. 13-21.

9. Il Sergio, I.2. 56-7 and 90-1.



effect of the two sounds 'ag torni, sem comandef, poc prudent, com saraf, si haveref dit', and 'af calef xi!'. These sharp endings are often at such a short distance from one another that they create the effect of a very simple syntax, made of short sentences. This is an impression emphasized not only by the parole tronche but also by the great number of monosyllabic words characteristic not only of Bigolo's vocabulary but also of Bergamasco in general.<sup>10</sup> It is a very important phenomenon because apart from the effective syntactical structure of his sentences, the very sound of the language creates a sintassi del parlato of a level lower than that of Taramoto and Lazarina.

The same impression of roughness and low level of elocution is built through the vocabulary. Though Bigolo is accused of wasting his time dilly-dallying with other Bergamaschi valligiani he is not a talkative character. The strong expressiveness of his idioms arises from the colourful plasticity of his expressions, *from* the repeated use of straightforward homespun stock-phrases di popolare chiarezza and *from* the abundance of pejorative suffixes which contrast with the classical diminutives of the Veneto used by Taramoto, Lazarina and Gioppo.

The insulting phraseology which emphasizes his social background is formed above all by variations of the word 'cancher': 'o a i venga ol cancher da sen', 'pota dol cancher,' and 'cancher de fer'. They have lost their original meaning of ill omen and flow out of his mouth as stock phrases. The spontaneity with which they escape

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10. Mora, p. 18.

him is made evident when he uses them to give himself courage when Emilia pours boiling water over him:

oi, ai, ui, nuu a bergamasch porcel, sofris, sta salt.<sup>11</sup>

Equally heavy are the pejorative suffixes; some of them are formed with names of animals as in the comic tradition, 'ol mulaz dell' inamorat dol me patru'<sup>12</sup> and 'becaz, beschiu, poltronzu, cancher margiolaz'.

Bigolo's vocabulary, more than that of any other character, reveals his social background. His terms of reference are often names of animals. Apart from the examples quoted previously they are particularly used to describe people's behaviour. Love has two dimensions: that of the pigeons (for gentle lovers) or that of the asses (for people like him) who 'supporta pi gagiardament i afanni, i dolor, e tutti i alter passiu` amorosi';<sup>13</sup> the encounter between the elderly Taramoto and Lazarina is seen like that between a ram and a sheep, with the unfailing pejorative suffix 'pegorazza' which has lost the harsh insulting tone and acquired one of amused raillery. And naturally his daily activities are also associated with those of the animals, either to those of the ass<sup>14</sup> or, more colourfully, to those of a sow, 'porca pigra no mangia pir madur'.<sup>15</sup>

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11. Il Sergio, V. 9. 24.

12. Ibid., II. 1.8.

13. Ibid., II.2. 32-3.

14. Ibid., II. 1. 31.

15. Ibid., IV. 7. 31.

Another inheritance from the Latin comedy is the reference to various kinds of food - they form the most prominent part of Bigolo's vocabulary. Their effect however is incisive as they form an integral part of the context in which they are expressed; they never sound gratuitous as if they are added only to comply with the comic tradition. They always come to Bigolo's mind pertinently and purposefully adding not only good humour but also an impression of spontaneity to the dialogue. He resorts to them almost subconsciously to describe the ideal woman (I.2. 71-7), to tease Gioppo for his untimely acciacchi, or to describe the consequence of the refusal of the Greek to love Gioppo: 'perque col patrù ved, chel so amor g'ha voltat ol cul, el fa chel formai mel volta a mi';<sup>16</sup> his master and mistress are judged according to their generosity with food (II.1.). But above all they seem to flow out of his mouth spontaneously not because he is hungry but because he is a glutton. He is not the ravenous character of some of Ruzzante's plays;<sup>17</sup> his masters do not starve him and he longs for delicacies (II.1.). Yet his references to food and meals are more artless than Lazarina's for she talks of the various dishes with the competence of an appreciative housekeeper and a skilled cook. While preparing the beffa Bigolo visualizes the opportunity of eating 'trenta livre de botir per podì slizziga mei in toi servisi',<sup>18</sup> and he intends to celebrate the success with a 'colazzionada'.<sup>19</sup>

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16. Il Sergio, II. 2. 31-2.

17. Milani, p. 141.

18. Il Sergio, II.2. 43-4

19. Ibid., II. 21. 8.

But, as previously said, his uncouth manners and his strongly materialistic vocabulary do not reflect a sullen unpleasant temperament. His very relationship with food is cheerful, his culinary comparisons are always expressed with gusto and with a 'saporosa vitalità'.<sup>20</sup>

It has been previously pointed out that the inborn, almost brutal frankness of Bigolo's vernacular brings into relief the fanciful in the dreams in Veneto of Gioppo and Taramoto.

As the juxtaposition of the harsh sound of the Bergamasco to the 'mollezza' of the Veneto, is not used for sheer comic purposes in the tradition of the best Veneto theatre,<sup>21</sup> similarly it never creates puns based on misunderstandings between the characters because of the different dialects.<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the episodes of the plot show that the characters are all linked by a close bond, a spontaneous understanding of each other, and a team-spirit in their schemes. Though in a comic spirit, this bond also exists between master and servant. The relations between Gioppo and Bigolo reproduce the comradeship between the servant and the young lover in the Latin comedy: the *disapproval* of the *servant as he* *writes* the unreasonable behaviour of *his old master*. Bigolo too in his

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20. Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Ruzzante, La Moscheta (Padua, 1954), p. 131.

21. For a successful contrast of the two dialects with effects of chiaroscuro, see Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to La Venexiana, p. 114.

22. Even when Fenarolo cannot resist complying with the comic tradition and inserts some forms of the 'comico del significato' with the mis-calling of the characters' called by Bigolo, 'Tarlagnot, Tarlamoc (II.19.), sonaiet (II.1.), they are so rare that they do not belittle the comic humour of the Bergamasco servant. For similar examples in 16th century comedy, see Altieri, pp. 283-5.

own comically rustic way chides his master pointing out the short-comings of old age and of the Greek woman:

Andaf à inamora vo che se gob, vech, vo cha tegnì  
l'anema co i denc [...] à dovivi inamoraf in quac  
nossa bergamascheta, galanta, zentila: que saves  
fa zo de i casoncei, de ignoc, dei brofadei, che i  
pe ghe sentis da agieti, ol fiat da fenochieti, e ol  
cul da mazorana. 23

The result is a familiarity with everybody which allows him to take the initiative to plot in order to make Gioppo fall out of love, which suggests to him the burlesque encounter between the unfortunate Taramoto and the willing Lazarina.

All these episodes not only indicate familiarity, but also a subtle knowledge of the victims; a perspicacious mind hidden under the crude sounds of the vernacular. It is a contrast of which not only the author but also the character himself is aware. And on a few occasions, as if conscious of the inadequacy of his language, he underlines his rare moments of irony with a diminutive, a grammatical form almost foreign to the Bergamasco,<sup>24</sup> pausing with pleasure on the long sound: his totally unexpected joke to the elderly couple is a 'bertersi', and Lazarina the victim a 'novizzetta'.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Il Sergio, I.2. 56-77.

24. Mora, p. 83.

25. Il Sergio, II. 20. 23; II. 21. 20.



### A Verisimilar Setting

At the beginning of this chapter the following questions were asked: what did Fenarolo mean by linguistic mimesis and how did he use it to give a real physiognomy to the characters and recreate a verisimilar background according to the intention he expressed in his introductory letter to Giovanni Vergi?

The analysis of the regional languages<sup>1</sup> of the various characters leads to the conclusion that the Veneto and Bergamasco of this play are by no means idioms atrophied by tradition; that, although there are expressions which belong to previous plays of the Veneto theatre, the two dialects throb with such a natural comic vitality that they create the illusion of real dialogues, of a genuine form of communication among the various characters.

It is therefore through these 'live' languages that Fenarolo moulds his protagonists who, though deriving and still belonging to the traditional comic topology, are not slavish reproductions of a previous model.

The result is a comic spirit which is not created by the credulity of some characters and the cunning of certain others alone, but which is above all generated by the ironic, jesting, festive and affectionate participation of all the characters in each other's 'problems' so as to give the impression of a small community of old acquaintances.

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1. It is both historically and artistically significant that Fenarolo himself still defines in 1558 the various idioms as 'lingue' and not 'dialects', see the introductory letter to Giovanni Vergi, Il Sergio, p. 2v.

In fact throughout the play Menarolo devotes special attention to the creation of a verisimilar setting reaching results superior to those of Calmo and Giancarli.

It has been previously seen how the dialects form a successful instrument of caratterizzazione ambientale because they blend the different linguistic registers of the pimp, the braggart, the old lover, at the same time enveloping all the various episodes in a domestic atmosphere.

Moreover the dialects are not used to form a parodic contrast with the Italian spoken by some of the characters as in Agnella.

The author's deliberate intention not to give the Italian language privileged treatment but to introduce it only like the other dialects as an idiom naturally spoken in cosmopolitan Venice is made

evident by several factors. Its level is not deliberately and outstandingly higher than Gioppo's Veneto: the young lovers in fact do not indulge in lofty theoretical dissertations on the nature of love but deal with the concrete problems arising from their

intricate situation. Emilia's arguments to herself are unconventionally ardent and thematically verisimilar,<sup>2</sup> Camilla and Panfilò's reciprocal teasing<sup>3</sup> sprinkled with irony<sup>4</sup> and pragmatism<sup>5</sup> has

lost all traditional artificial tone so that the characters vibrate with humanity. The only Petrarchan protestations of love, Odorico's,

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2. Il Sergio, see Emilia's speeches, II.3., II.5.

3. Ibid., II. 4.

4. Ibid., I. 11. 19.

5. Ibid., I. 1.

are sufficiently exaggerated as to result in a caricature. Moreover the Italian language is not a sign of a higher status. It is spoken by Gioppo's wife, by the servant Gasparina and by Odorico's servant Ughetto. Not only is their syntax and content of the same level as the characters speaking in vernacular - 'andando a solazzo', Panfilo che molto prima dovea far seco l'amore',<sup>6</sup> confides Gioppo's wife to Camilla's step mother, 'cacherie',<sup>7</sup> sums up the massara listening to Lazarina's beauty treatments - but the Italian is also occasionally scattered with words belonging to the Veneto.<sup>8</sup>

To give homogeneity to the play, the author has also taken particular care to introduce details particularly suitable to the creation of a background to the story. The town is Venice<sup>9</sup> presented on three levels. In the background there is the cosmopolitan city, in the middleground the life in the calle and campielli, and in the foreground, there are the events and the people's 'problems' in a rione.

The sixteenth-century Serenissima which used to cause the visitor to stand amazed at the presence of so many foreigners<sup>10</sup> is not pictured here in the luxury of its buildings, and its ceremonies, nor for the noise and bustle of its trades. What Venarolo constantly stresses is the unrestricted hospitalit of the town towards all foreigners: he portrays it through the numerous

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6. Il Sergio, III. 18. 54-5.

7. Ibid., IV. 3. 11.

8. Ibid., 'simia' IV. 9. 38; 'sbasita' IV. 9. 23.

9. Ibid., see the introductory letter to Giovanni Vergi and the Prologo by Neptune.

10. The introductory letter to Giovanni Vergi, p. 2v. and III. 1. 30 ff.



speeches of praise uttered by several characters<sup>11</sup> and exemplifies it through the events in the life of some of the characters. It is an emblem of the easy way in which they settle in Venice.

People of every social condition benefit from it: we have the rich Sienese gentleman Odorico who suffers agonies of love for the capricious Venetian foundling Emilia; Camillo and Panfilo the young couple in disguise who have fled from home; Sergio the merchant from Ravenna who was once a wealthy man and who, pursued by ill luck, is trying to start a new life in this town after grievous vicissitudes in the Middle East and in the Aegean; his Greek wife Alessandra who all on her own 'soletta'<sup>12</sup> has walked all the way to Venice across Albania; Taramoto, who, after spending his life on the sea, is now content with dreaming of and talking with his neighbours about adventures he has never liked; and finally we have Bigolo who has emigrated from his mountain valley to Venice in search of a job and of a certain contract but who still remains in close contact with his peasant world.<sup>13</sup>

Though he does not describe in depth the relations between the Venetians and the foreigners, Fenarolo pauses to give a description of the community of which some of them have become a part thanks to their work. Alessandra who, after her long journey has settled in Venice and has her own group of clients who appreciate

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11. Il Sergio, the Prologo, I.1. 51-3. I.3. 56-7. III.1. 29-31. For similar praises, see Il Travaglia, I.20. Ruzzante, la Betia, Prologo. Aretino, Il Marescalco II.6. and la Talanta II.6.

12. Il Sergio, IV. 6. 29.

13. Ibid., I.2.; see also I.2. and V. 6.

her sewing ability,<sup>14</sup> has an agreement with a broker who procures tenants for her.<sup>15</sup> Bigolo, through Gioppo's words, provides an entertaining picture which could be entitled 'a day among the comunita bergamasca in Venice'.<sup>16</sup> If the Venetian links with other countries bring into relief above all Venice as 'molo della pace, [...] seggio della concordia, [...] trono della giustizia, [...] rifugio delle genti',<sup>17</sup> the life in a district portrays the city as a place of bustling work and commerce.

It is the same mild reality, 'in entilita dalla vita urbana', that is present in Calmo.<sup>18</sup> The plot resounds with the voices and the gossiping of 'le cale, le hostarie, i bastioni, i porta lettere, la prima cerca'.<sup>19</sup> These little figures that appear only fleetingly exemplify the ferment of the humble trades, of the daily activities which take place in a socially defined context where everybody knows everybody's business, where people call each other by their nickname or by the name of a place. There are vignettes of activities within the law - the friar collecting bread from door to door along the Anconeta da Marghera (IV. 12.), the fishmonger Cattazzo who sells fried fish a S. Zanabragola (IV. 12.) and the court master of Ca'Orso and Ca'Ruzini (I.5.); and there are vignettes of illegal jobs - the pickpocket waiting for the passengers arriving from the ships

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14. Il Sergio, I.6. 20ff.

15. Ibid., III. 19. 1ff.

16. Ibid., I. 3. 15ff.

17. Ibid., Prologo.

18. Zorzi, 'Introduzione' to Ruzante, Teatro, p. xxviii.

19. Il Sergio, IV. 11. 28.

and taking advantage of the confusion of the port (III.1.), and the buyers of the stolen silver pieces.

The hustle outside is matched by the women's unceasing work inside the houses. Before presenting each episode strictly linked with the development of the plot, Fenarolo is almost always attentive to present the job of each character. This has already been pointed out in the case of Alessandra; it is the same for the servant 'puttanella'<sup>20</sup> Gasparina, for the mothers of the two young fugitives in love who stop to talk not only of their family problems but even of problems of imports and exports;<sup>21</sup> and for Iazarina who in a long episode is given a chance to exhibit all her professional skill as a beautician for a bride hinting also of the existence of even more qualified specialists for the treatment of the veins on the breasts (IV. 3.).

Amidst this swarm of minor figures and their daily struggle with life the main protagonists live their erudite-comedy adventures. And as he sketched *Venetian* life as the background, so Fenarolo carefully brings into relief the human relations existing between the 'heroes' of the comedy. The result is a picture of the life in a district as Bigolo says, 'am par che vaghi a fa mercat col capitol de la contrada per vos cont'.<sup>22</sup> The various projects, decisions, plotting and beffa take place interspersed with sentences and stock-phrases which transform a cluster of characters typical of the erudite tradition into a group of neighbours who have known

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20. Il Sergio, III. 3. 10.

21. Ibid., IV. 3. 27-9.

22. Ibid., I.2. 5-6. Bigolo warns his master that his love affair is as secret as if done with the permission of the elderly of the parish.

each other for a long time,<sup>23</sup> who assess and take advantage of the respective qualities and of the respective short-comings to suit their own purposes.

However, although the author has successfully achieved the reproduction of a verisimilar setting by the introduction of real language, a realistic use of them, and by the inclusion of several precise details of town life, the comedy is never a study of the relations between the characters and the social hierarchy. Events and vicissitudes never grow out of the social situation nor are they caused by the individual moral or social conditioning of the various characters. In the same way as it is not possible to talk of a complex characterization of the protagonists, it must also be concluded that Fenarolo's imitation of reality stops at the surface.

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23. Il Sergio, 'E voglio favellar per quel vecchio mato sempio a sta vedoa griega: perche le mio amico' (I.5. 80-2.) 'ben, ben, el no acade che tra nu, che se cognoscemo za mile ani, faga la pizzochera' (I.5. 38-9) 'mo lui e mi semo una cosa medema' (III. 9. 23.).



### Conclusion

To repeat what was said in the Introduction, this research has been neither easy nor short. However, I feel it has proved worthwhile: the material which has come to light shows that the study of the theatre in provincial areas has an intrinsic value and is also necessary in the wider context of enabling a more comprehensive picture of the sixteenth-century Italian theatre to be built up.

The records of plays performed in Brescia and the analysis of the three comedies have revealed interestingly unexpected links of the Brescian Renaissance theatre with the theatrical works and the literary and linguistic theories of important Italian as well as foreign men of thought.

It is also hoped that this study on sixteenth-century theatre in a peripheral area has enhanced the importance of the influence of some historical factors (financial, architectural and legislative) on the theatrical output of the Italian provinces as well as of the Italian capitals.

The Introduction expressed already the surprise for the unexpected interest for the theatre in Brescia and ~~the~~ disagreement with the only paragraph existing on the subject. The assertion by Ettore Caccia has been proved factually incorrect since at least one section of the Brescian population - the nobility - took a strong interest in the theatre. As for the lack of participation on the part of the populace, Caccia's explanation is rather facile for two major reasons: it does not take into consideration that a great role in the promotion of theatrical festivals in the major Italian Renaissance towns was not played by the populace but by the middle classes of craftsmen and merchants; secondly, Caccia's blame on the inborn lack of interest of the 'plebe' omits to consider the social circumstances which may have led to his claimed 'man-canza [...] di iniziative e di idee'. Of course, the creation of a masterpiece instead of second-

class works cannot be explained by the favourable historical circumstances, but it is possible to offer a suggestion of the reasons which may have led the playwrights of a town and its territory to express themselves through certain literary forms and to refuse others. Therefore it is necessary to look at Caccia's statement in the context of the following conclusions reached about the theatrical background in Brescia.

Firstly the records show that the nobility enjoyed both the monopoly of the theatre and of the local government; that in Brescia the control of the nobility over the government of the town was stronger than anywhere else in the Republic of Venice. Secondly, the records show that the only channel through which permission to stage comedies could be obtained was the above mentioned local government. Thirdly, the documents prove that Brescia and the Bresciano were very interested in the ideas of the Reformation and that there is evidence that important local citizens expressed their political and religious contestazione through forms of theatrical 'happenings' and perhaps even through plays written in the forms of the Commedia Erudita.

This, together with the strategic geographical position of Brescia, may have led the authorities to impose a stronger control over all the social entertainments of the town and particularly over the theatre - a literary genre which could easily appeal and be understood also by the illiterate part of the population.

Fourthly, there were no theatrical logistic facilities outside those provided in the official residence of the Venetian authorities: hence it is easy to imagine that the plays performed in the Broletto were to meet their political as well as their literary requirements. On the other hand, the Rettori may have offered the financial support and the political protection occasionally necessary against the censorious attitude of the local municipal authorities; they may have also encouraged the writing of new plays and fostered the diffusion of some linguistic aspects which were in auge in the Veneto theatre.

Fifthly, all the records on any other form of entertainment organized in the town and the province show that they were exclusively set up in the interest of the prestige of the nobility and of the Venetian government. Hence there was the need to support well-tried forms which would <sup>u</sup> guarantee the appreciation of famous foreign visitors and hence a ban of all experimental, local and uncouth forms which might damage the town's *reputation* and which might be interpreted as *insulting* to the Venetian officials.

Finally, all the records have shown that the audiences both in Brescia and in Asola and Salò were non heterogeneous and that therefore there was no variety in taste. Because of their education, their familiarity with the theatre production of the leading Italian courts and a political inferiority complex <sup>to</sup> *due* the absence of an independent local court, the Brescian noblemen who owned the monopoly over all forms of entertainment in Brescia, felt a sense of shame towards their local traditions and their own native language.

The result was a theatre of imitation. The imitation of those models that had been successful in the major towns and which would present no risk in being staged in front of the refined audiences invited *to* the residence of the Rettori. This interpretation is corroborated by the works which have been analysed.

The search for a perfect Terentian structure in I Gelosi, the courtly amatory humour and the intellectual debates on fashionable topics in Agnella appealed to a culturally sophisticated public.

This cultural and historical background also explains the use of the Tuscan language and the absence of the local dialect or of any other indigenous forms. Literary history cannot be based on hypotheses. It is however possible to wonder whether the clumsiness and stiffness of the language in I Gelosi, for instance, is not the primary cause of the 'paleness' of the play and whether a more forceful and lively idiom would not have helped the author in his attempt to dramatize some aspects of the local realities. It is not



coincidence that the most charming and spontaneous parts in Agnella are those played by the group of women gossiping *about* their love stories or by the group of servants *who tease them about their amorous exploits* and their cowardice.

Of the plays examined, Il Sergio is the one which offers more awareness of the potential of a locally based theatre; but even this comedy offers further evidence of the subjugation of Brescian playwrights to the natural culture and to established models. Though Fenarolo obviously felt the need to experiment *with* different dramatic forms, less tied at least linguistically to the erudite tradition and to give a social reality to the blank anonymous background of the previous production, the Brescian playwright once again turned to a 'foreign' theatre (the multidialectale production of the Veneto).

Because of this, the debate which still divides scholars about the popular or erudite origin of the Veneto theatre does not concern this dissertation. It is in fact not possible to say that Fenarolo's play had the same innovating impact as Calmo's who, in the words of Achille Mango, gave 'alla commedia una nuova struttura in cui grazie al suo linguaggio, e cioè all'intervento dei dialetti, nasce una comunicazione diretta con il pubblico che tale linguaggio usava nella vita quotidiana'.<sup>I</sup>

Fenarolo's comedy is therefore only the *manifestation* of a particular moment of the Veneto Renaissance. Even if authors such as Ruzzante and Calmo represented a positive reaction and mark an innovation in the history of the Renaissance theatre, their new approach adopted by 'foreign' authors and transplanted in 'foreign' theatres could develop no further as there was no indigenous tradition from which local authors could draw in order to create new forms.

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I. Mango, p.32.



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